

227/20

DISCOURSES

John

ON

Several Subjects,

But Principally on the

SEPARATE STATE

OF

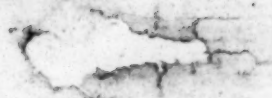
S O U L S.

By *DANIEL STURM*, M.A.
and Rector of *EAST-HATLEY* in the
County of *CAMBRIDGE*.

CAMBRIDGE,

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MDCCXVI.

DISCOURSES



ON

GENERAL SUBJECTS



BY

10
X

To the RIGHT WORSHIPFULL
THOMAS SHERLOCK D.D.
VICECHANCELLOR
OF THE
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE;
AND
MASTER of the TEMPLE.

REVEREND SIR,

ADDRESSES to great
Names in the Front
of a Treatise do, for
the most part, either acknow-
ledge Favours, or beg Protect-
ion: But the Design of this
is purely to *congratulate*.

As it was my happy Lot
to be one of your *Contempo-*
* 2 *raries*

DEDICATION.

varies in the same *University* and the same *College*; I could not well miss of the great Honour of some *small* Acquaintance with you. It required very little Sagacity in those that knew you from your lowest standing in the *Venerable* Body, which now flourisheth under your Government, to presage your being what you are.

SIR, I heartily rejoyce in all your Honours; and far more so in your deserving greater: My *Priesthood* in general obliges me to do so. The *Sacred* at this Day an Order of Men very much misrepresented; It must be
ther

D E D I C A T I O N.

therefore a Comfort to us, that some of them daily shew what great things *Wisdom with an Inheritance* in the Hands of a *Divine* is able to do: and since in this Age 'tis thought a bold Task to write upon *the Dignity of Souls*; that Man, who hath ventur'd to meddle with such a Subject, would be very much wanting to his Design, should he omit to turn his *Readers Eye* towards a *Conspicuous Instance*, when so near at hand, which displays the Mind of Man in its greatest Grandeur.

My old Relation to *our Illustrious Mother*, and to the

* 3 *Learned*

DEDICATION.

Learned Society of St. Katherine's Hall in Particular, makes me your Debter for the vast Obligations you have laid upon *both* in a very short compass of Time; and that too when *good Government* seems to grow an harder Task than ever it was before. I heartily wish we had more Persons of the same *Courageous* and *Impartial* Spirit: Time will open mens Eyes, and shew the difference between real Services and loud Pretences to the Public: Your Promotion hath been *true* Promotion; for indeed none is so that is extorted by *Clamour*, *Bribes* and *servile Importunity*; or
that

DEDICATION.

that is not given out of Regard to a Merit, which even the Owner's Modesty cannot possibly hide. *Party* and siding with it may make Men popular for a while; but *Posterity* judge of Men by other Rules: and whenever they lament poor *Cicero's* Fate in his *Son*; I do not doubt but *Dean Sherlock's* will occur to their Thoughts as the *Happy Reverse* of it.

All that I shall add, Sir, for I would not displease so far as not to be forgiven, is that if the *Governour* at *Cambridge* and the *Preacher* at the *Court* and *Temple* shall still

DEDICATION.

carry on their Contest for Superiority, we may grow very Confident, that some *Historians* will arise under your Superintendence fit to write *King George's Annals*, and to stand conclass'd with *Thucydides* and *Livy* in that Noble *Vatican*, which we owe to his *Royal Munificence*.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

East Hasley,
October 23^d.

1715

Your most obedient,

and most humble Servant

DANIEL STURMY.

T H E

THE

PREFACE.

IF *these Discourses should prove usefull, tho' but to a small Number of Heavenly-minded Persons, I shall rejoyce in my Compliance with the Motion of my Friends to give them to the Press: and if they should be acceptable to the generality of the Readers, I will, with God's Leave, be as early in the Publication of a Second Volume, as I have been slow in the Publication of the First.*

As to the Choice of the Discourses; many of them were bespoke by some of the main Promoters of the Impression; otherwise, they had not been printed; and I had put in more upon the Principal Subject.

This is a sufficient Answer to those who ask why so few upon the Separate State; I have more in reserve for my next.

Others may think there are too many upon a Subject, which they think is very dry and barren; and it is but a sign of a Presumptuous Curiosity to attempt it; and truly, what one could write upon it would,
I con-

P R E F A C E.

I confess, prove but meer swelling Words of Vanity; provided I pretended to write of this Matter by the meer Light of Nature; as Heraclides Ponticus, Antisthenes, Democritus and Protagoras did: for as the case was with them, Socrates was much the Wiser Man; who, when he was asked what was done in the next World, made Answer that he had never been there, nor conversed with any one that came from thence.

But, Blessed be God, our Condition is very different from theirs; we live under an Higher Light: One who hath been there hath told us somewhat of the Matter: Revelation hath asserted something about it in exprefs Words; and a great deal more implicitly in the intire Frame and Drift of its Doctrines; and of the History of the Life and Death of our Saviour: and the Obscurity of the Subject (since even that is Capable of Practical Improvement) should rather quicken than discourage our attentive thinking. Nothing concerns us more than to brighten our Faith as much as ever we can with relation to the State of our Souls after Death. Futuri Contemplatione jam Vivimus: Intense Meditation upon what will befall us after Death, is the Life of a Christian Soul.

And

P R E F A C E.

And I cannot but be of Aquinas's Mind (tho' the Latin is not worth transcribing) that the most Imperfect Knowledge of the noblest Subjects is more desirable, than a State of downright Ignorance; and Contributes very much to the Advancement of the Mind of Man. Death is a Subject in which we are all concern'd, and the Issues of it are of the last Consequence to us: 'tis a very good Distinction, whoever was the Author of it, which we find in the following Sentence: Curiosus est qui ea avidè scrutatur, quæ ad se non pertinent; studiosus vero qui diligenter ea perquirat, quæ ad se attinent. We may claim the Liberty of Free-thinking, where we don't interfere with, or contradict any thing in the Liturgy, Articles, Canons or Homilies of the Church. The Learned Mr. Swinden hath amply proved this in the first part of his Ingenious Book concerning Hell.

*If it should be asked, why I have given no Proofs of the Signification which I have given of Sheol and Hades; I answer; the Learned may see them in Bp. Pearson upon the Creed; in Windets *ερωματα επιτομιος* de vita functorum Statu, and in Arch-Bp. Usher's Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland: and in Forbesius a Corfe: and as for Persons of another Character, such Proofs are no Proofs to them.*

I once

P R E F A C E.

I once intended to have made some Remarks in this Preface upon a Book entitled, some Primitive Doctrines reviv'd; or the Intermediate or Middle State of Departed Souls (as to Happiness or Misery) before the Day of Judgment &c; but I have not Room; and therefore must be content to reserve them for my Preface to my next Volume.

There are some Expressions in this Book which seem contradictory in Sound; such as, a New Pair of First Parents: a second Protoplast and the like. However, if the Reader will be so courteous as to trace the course of the Argument, and try to substitute more proper ones in the room of them; 'tis not impossible but that they may pass for pardonable Oxymorons.

An Advertisement concerning some of the Chief E R R A T A.

I depend upon the Reader's Courtesie to read *Principle* instead of *Principal* in several places. to read *conformed* instead of *Confirm'd*. p. 262. to add the word *Pains* to those words *took so much* p. 265. to read *Imagination* instead of *Indignation* p. 267 to read *cast* instead of *last* p. 284. to read instead of, *as the Original; as the LXX more exactly according to the Original.* p. 308. to read *Prosperity* instead of *Posterity* p. 333 to read *our Communion*, instead of *Communication* p. 354. to read *Offers* instead of *Office* p. 374.

T H

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tell: God knoweth.)*

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S E R M O N

PREACH'D first before

The Right Honorable the

LORD MAYOR,

A N D

COURT of ALDERMEN;

A T

St. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL in LONDON;

And afterwards before the

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

HEB. II. 16.

He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

COMMENTATORS differ very much in stating the exact import of two expressions in this Text: But they ever did, and always must, unanimously agree, that *Christ* is the person here spoken of: and they do all moreover agree, that the direct meaning of

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the

the passage of Scripture before us is plainly this. *Whereas the Blessed Jesus did nothing to recover those Angels that fell to their Former State of Bliss; yet he did take hold of Man when he fell to rescue him from that destruction, in which his sin had otherwise irrecoverably involved both him and his Posterity.*

Wherefore in discoursing on this subject, I shall *First* briefly recount to you some Propositions that are plainly implied in the Contents of this Scripture. *Secondly*, I shall consider the more direct and general assertion of the Text.

First, I am just briefly to mind you of some Propositions that are evidently contain'd in the *General* Proposition of this Text.

Now it is very evident, at first sight, that it is here implied *1st*. That there were *Angels* which fell from their first Estate, who stood in need of Redemption. *2^{ly}*. That *Mankind*, call'd here *the Seed of Abraham*, also fell, and stood in need of Redemption. *3^{dly}*. That the *Person* here spoken of undertook to redeem *Fallen Man*. *4^{ly}*. That the *Fallen Angels* receiv'd no benefit from, nor were sharers in the Redemption, which the said Person procured and accomplished for *Fallen Mankind*. *5^{ly}*. That He who redeemed *Mankind*, and yet did not redeem the *Fallen*

Angels

Angels, was a Person before he undertook our Redemption ; or did partake of that Nature in which he wrought *this* Redemption ; He was not like other Men, or born a Man without his own foreknowledg of it ; but was possess'd of *another*, and that a *more Glorious* Nature, before he was born of the *Virgin Mary*, and freely chose to be *so* born.

All these observations occur to every ones Notice, from the first view, out of the words themselves ; and if any one can doubt of the last, yet the *Context* fairly consider'd will easily remove any such doubt : But I don't design to descend to a particular discussion of these several Heads ; only with relation to the last, I can't but observe, that since our Blessed Lord is here implicitly affirm'd to be a *Person* before he was a *Man*, and did partake of our Nature, he was *then* either some created Being *Superiour* to Man, or some creature *inferiour* to Man ; or an *Human Soul in a State of Preexistence* ; or else that he was an *Eternal Divine Person* partaking of an *Uncreated* Nature, according to the Faith of our Church. For,

1st. He could not then be a created Being of any Order *Superiour* to Man ; for all those Beings, whether they be *Mights* or *Dominions*, *Thrones* or *Principalities*, are com-

prehended in the Universal Term of *Angel*. Not only particular Angels, but the several Classes of those Creatures perhaps are innumerable; and the distinct Orbs which they inhabit both in their State of Tryal, and in their fix'd state of Reward, may, for ought we know, be innumerable too, and probably are so; since we can't but observe that there are more Receptacles of Lucid Matter fitted for the accommodation of such Ethereal Beings than we can number: However let the scale of that Life and Being, which is Superiour to Man, reach never so high in the ascent of our Contemplation, from the meanest Angel, of the meanest Order, to the highest of the Highest Order of Angels; and let us assign as many specifick differences of capacity and endowments to those superior Creatures amongst themselves as we please, they are all Angels in Common; for Scripture calls all Creatures superiour to Man by that general Denomination; but we are sure the Person referred to in the Text could not be an Angel of any kind or Order, for those are the Creatures which he refus'd to redeem, by assuming their Nature to himself; and we can't sure suppose that our Apostle would so far trifle, as to say that an Angel refused to take that Nature whereof he was already a Partaker. Besides, what An

gel, tho' he were the Supreme Angel of all, can be conceived capable, and sufficiently meritorious, to effectuate the Redemption of vast Multitudes of his own Apostatiz'd Fellow-creatures, by any thing which he could *do* or *suffer* for them in any Nature whatsoever: and yet, he who redeemed Man is here supposed capable of having redeemed Angels also, tho' he refus'd to redeem them; for had not St. Paul thought him capable of redeeming Angels, he would never have judg'd it fit and pertinent, to the drift of his Argument, to have observ'd that he refus'd that Redemption to Angels which he obtain'd for Mankind. For to what purpose, or with what force of arguing, could the Apostle lay such stress, as he apparently doth, upon his *choosing to redeem us*, *when he refus'd to redeem the Angels*, unless he believ'd the same person to be able to redeem *them*, as well as *Man*, if he had thought fit to have done it?

But 2^{dly}. This reason holds stronger yet against our Saviour's being a Creature of any Order Inferiour to Man, before he was a Man; as also 3^{dly}. against his being an human Soul in a state of Preexistence at that time. For if those brighter and more glorious Creatures would sink under such an undertaking; much more must those who

are below them at so vast a distance be more uncapable of enterprising a work of such prodigious efficacy and Mercy, as the Redemption of the Apostate Angels would have been.

Wherefore, since the Person spoken of in the Text could not be a Creature of any Rank or Denomination before he was a Man, according to the chain and course of our Apostle's Argument, as it is plain he could not, because all Creatures must be either *Superiour* to Man, or *Inferiour* to Man, or *Coordinate* with Man; I say, forasmuch as he was none of these, we must take it for granted that the Writer of this Epistle did believe him to be an Eternal, Divine and Uncreated Person; and we ought to believe this too, tho' it is a Myste-rious Article of Faith that we cannot comprehend. And indeed, who that considers the greatness of the Redemption which was purchas'd and accomplish'd by Christ for us, can possibly conceive that it could be wrought by the Power and Goodness of a meer Man, or a meer Creature indeed tho' never so much Superiour to Man? If one of the Antients thought he had good reason to call the *Pastoral Office, onus Angelorum humeris formidandum*, a burden which the Angels themselves might dread to undertake; how much more may the Office of a Redeemer

deemer of Mankind from everlasting ruin, and the incensed Wrath and Justice of God, be allowed to be what the most stately Seraph is not able to go through, nor Hosts of Confederated Cherubims capable of undergoing: No, it cost more to redeem our immortal Souls, and Angels must let that alone for ever; and therefore our help was laid upon that Blessed Son of God, who alone is thus mighty to save and to work out so great salvation for us.

What I have already deliver'd hath been only by way of *cursor*y remark upon some *inclusive* Propositions, which are but couch'd and implied in these words of the Apostle; *He took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham.* I proceed now to consider the *Cardinal* and *direct* assertion of the Text, which in effect is this. *Jesus Christ preferr'd the Redeeming of Mankind before the Redemption of Fallen Angels.*

In Discoursing upon it I shall 1st. assign some Reasons which might induce our Blessed Lord to undertake the Redemption of Mankind, tho' he did not do any thing towards redeeming the Fallen Angels. 2^{dly}. I shall enquire what practical influence the serious consideration of Christ's preference of the Redemption of Mankind before that

of Angels ought to have upon our Conduct and behaviour.

1st. Some Reasons are to be assign'd, which might induce our Blessed Lord to undertake the Redemption of Mankind; tho' he did not do any thing for the redeeming the fallen Angels.

Now we may take some Reasons for this rejection of Angels and preference of Men: 1st. from the difference of the *Nature* of Angels and Men; 2^{dly}. from the difference of the *State* whence they fell, with some other *Collateral* circumstances; 3^{dly}. from the different *extent* and *consequences* of their Fall.

And 1st. I say the difference of the Nature of Angels and Men furnisheth us with a reason for God's tendring Redemption to Man, tho' he offered no such favour to the Fallen Angels. The Nature of Angels was intirely Spirit in its make and groundwork; They had no gross particles of Matter to clog and depress them; They were Creatures of a greater Knowledge, of a larger Capacity and more exquisite endowments than Man could pretend to; They were the First born of the Creation, and had the earliest favours from the bounty of their Maker; They did not see God and Heaven at such a distance, nor thro' a Grate as Men do; They had no corruptible Body like ours to disturb and check their Religious Passions,

nor

nor to weigh them down to sordid Desires and mean compliances. The Soul of *Adam* liv'd by *Faith*, but theirs liv'd by *Sight*; and an immediate Converse with God. Now all must allow that by how much the greater the Light or other Talents of Offenders are, so much the more provoking their offences and abuses of Goodness must be before God. Now that was the case of the Revolted Angels: They sinn'd against more Knowledge and brighter Convictions of sin and Duty than Man did. And this is the first aggravation of the Fall of Angels, which might expose them to the missing of that Compassion which we found from God in his readiness to redeem us; when at the same time he passed by those morning Stars of the Creation, who had defil'd themselves by a foul Apostacy from him.

2^{dly}. The difference of the State from whence Angels and Men fell, makes a great disparity between the Circumstances of the Revolt of both from their Maker. Man fell in a Paradise, but that Paradise was only an Earthly One; but the Angels fell in a more glorious place, and committed Rebellion against their Immortal Sovereign in Heaven it self: That Heaven indeed was but a *Probationary* Heaven, not like the Heaven in which the Good Angels are now seated; and

and far shorter still of the Glory of that Heaven, in which will be their eternal Mansion after the General Judgment of Angels and Men: Nevertheless, it was a finer and more delectable Region than *Adam's* place of tryal in its best estate.

Besides, the Fallen Angels were confederate in their Wickedness, and persisted in it, till they were conquered and routed from their lofty seats of Glory, by those of their Fellow Creatures that remain'd dutifull and loyal to their Maker; and yet it is very probable that a great many of these had dissuaded them from their bold and vain attempts. Their Fall had another aggravation, in that they were the first that introduc'd *sin*, *infection*, and *mortality* into the Stately Worlds which the Great God hath made: Those beauteous Worlds which came new and undefiled out of his Hands; Worlds, which no Love short of Infinite could have resolv'd to make; Worlds, which none but an Omnipotent Power could have commanded out of a dark and shapeless chaos into Being; Worlds in a word, which an unerring Wisdom had contriv'd and ballanc'd by the exactest Rules and most correspondent proportions of *Number*, *Weight* and *Measure*: Those beauteous Worlds, I say, where no sooner in a manner finish'd, but they were polluted

polluted by the Pride and Sin of these ungrateful Creatures which ow'd him the strictest Duty, Gratitude, and Obedience: So that They were the Ringleaders of all Rebellion and Apostacy: They were their own Tempters and could not sin by any forreign example of Disloyalty, or by any instigation but from their own depraved temper. Sin was the very Creature and Invention of their own Folly. Whereas it was not thus with our First Parents; These were alone, had no wiser Fellow creatures to dissuade them; but on the other hand they found Temptation, and a Seducer that was exceeding subtle at devising Mischiefs, even in their Paradise of Tryal. Now tho' this Circumstance could not *Justify*, yet it did very much *mitigate* their fault, and could not but move the pity of even an *exasperated* God, to see them thus supplanted of both their present bliss in Possession, and their hopes of greater hereafter, by the malicious Policy of a Cunning Impostor: And it was no great wonder that Man, in a State of Innocence, should be foil'd by an Angel. For tho' he was an Apostate, yet he had still enough of the Angel left to prove too strong and subtle in his attempts upon frail and Terrestrial Creatures. These were not very likely of themselves, without looking up to God, to countermine those

those wiles which were laid to entrap them; They were a raw unexperienc'd Pair, and were not so wise as to keep themselves intent upon God with prayer and watchfulness, and therefore might fall by the insinuations of Evil Angels; just as those Angels before had fallen, by too great an admiration of their own lustre, (a lustre which was but of yesterday) and had forgot from whom they had so lately receiv'd all the Glory and Graces wherewith they found themselves so richly beautified and adorn'd.

Add to this, Angels in their Sin seem'd to aim at formidable designs, to vye foolishly with their Maker in Glory, and to attempt the dethroning of God himself: So strangely doth Pride intoxicate those, who are beleper'd with it: But Man in his sin had no such presumptuous design in view, but seem'd to sin out of pure easiness and folly, for the tryal of an Experiment, and the pleasing a vain Curiosity, tho' it prov'd a very Fatal one in the Event. As he did not sin against so bright an evidence of the Folly and Malignity of sin; so he did not do it with that Arrogance that Angels did. We do not read of any Remorse or shame of the Fallen Angels upon Conviction: But we do that *Adam* would have hid his Guilt and shame, if he could; and wish'd himself out of Being
again

again for having done so base and weak an action.- Without doubt that Modesty which shuns Guilt, and guards against it is the best; Nevertheless that which condemns it afterwards is better than none at all.

3dly. The different *Extent* and *Consequence* of the Fall of Angels and Man supplies us with another Reason for Christ's preferring our Redemption before theirs. It is the honour of Beings which are intirely Spirit by Nature to be every one of them immediately created by God, without the use or mediation of Creatures of their own kind. Not only the first patterns of them, but every single and individual Creature amongst them are the pure and immediate handywork of the Great and Universal Cause. Of this kind are all Angels, who were created all together and not successively one after another indifferent, more or less latterly tracts of Time, as other inferiour Creatures are. Wherefore the Laws of the Creation having not ordain'd one Angel to be derived from another by Generation, 'tis evident that no Angels can necessarily suffer by the Fall of other Angels; But every Angel falls for himself, and suffers for himself, and solely by himself, if he sins alone. And in case Multitudes of them fall, all of them are not thereby unavoidably ruin'd, but only

those wiles which were laid to entrap them; They were a raw unexperienc'd Pair, and were not so wise as to keep themselves intent upon God with prayer and watchfulness, and therefore might fall by the insinuations of Evil Angels; just as those Angels before had fallen, by too great an admiration of their own lustre, (a lustre which was but of yesterday) and had forgot from whom they had so lately receiv'd all the Glory and Graces wherewith they found themselves so richly beautified and adorn'd.

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again

again for having done so base and weak an action.- Without doubt that Modesty which shuns Guilt, and guards against it is the best; Nevertheless that which condemns it afterwards is better than none at all.

3dly. The different *Extent* and *Consequence* of the Fall of Angels and Man supplies us with another Reason for Christ's preferring our Redemption before theirs. It is the honour of Beings which are intirely Spirit by Nature to be every one of them immediately created by God, without the use or mediation of Creatures of their own kind. Not only the first patterns of them, but every single and individual Creature amongst them are the pure and immediate handywork of the Great and Universal Cause. Of this kind are all Angels, who were created all together and not successively one after another indifferent, more or less latterly tracts of Time, as other inferiour Creatures are. Wherefore the Laws of the Creation having not ordain'd one Angel to be derived from another by Generation, 'tis evident that no Angels can necessarily suffer by the Fall of other Angels; But every Angel falls for himself, and suffers for himself, and solely by himself, if he sins alone. And in case Multitudes of them fall, all of them are not thereby unavoidably ruin'd, but only

ly as many as fell: So that tho' the Fall of Revolted Angels made a considerable breach in the Angelical Worlds, yet none of those Worlds were dispeopled by their Fall, nor was the entire Nature and class of Celestial Creatures lost and extinguish'd by the lapse of great Multitudes of them: For let the Legions of Devils be never so numerous, we have good Reason to believe that the Number of those Myriads of Good Angels which did not fall is unspeakably greater, more numerous perhaps than ten thousand compar'd with ten. Now tho' God would have been better pleas'd, if they had not fallen, yet upon the foremention'd account, he might not think it necessary to redeem them in point of Mercy, least the impunity of such particular offenders might embolden other good Angels to revolt in greater numbers still, and to become as bad as They had been. Besides, to what State should such Angels be recover'd? To a state of Tryal? That was already past: and they might as well on the score of Reason and Equity hope, for two thousand as for two states of Tryal, since 'tis inconsistent with the Institution and design of a State of Tryal, and of framing Creatures capable of fitting themselves in it for a State of Reward, to suffer it to be repeated, after it was once expired. Thus

it was with the *Fallen Angels*.

But it is not with *Terrestrial* Creatures, as it is with *Celestial* Orders of them: For *Terrestrial* Creatures are immediately created in none but their *First Pairs*, which are the Samples of the rest, to be derived by them in the course and channels of Birth and Generation: Now of this Nature is Man; who is but part Spirit, being partly Body in his Composition. The First Pair were God's immediate Work: The rest must all be introduc'd into the World down from them as other *Terrestrial* Creatures are. And those which were to be deriv'd from them are so much a part of them, that they take the Natural advantages and disadvantages of their Constitution from them: So that the First Pairs being distemper'd must needs cause an *Epidemical* Disease through the whole Race of Men that were at that time inclosed in two, and afterwards to be procreated from them; insomuch that in their infection, innumerable Millions of Creatures were infected: Children unborn, even those that were to be born in the remotest Ages of the World had Hereditary Evils, Death and Ruin entailed upon them. Their Fall therefore was a spreading mischief, that would have cover'd the face of the whole Earth, and have circulated in a train of fatal Consequences

quences without end, reparation, or controul; had not the pity of God found out the expedient of Redemption to withstand it: otherwise, either the Earth must have been depopulated, and an whole species of Creatures have prov'd extinct; or they must have groan'd under intolerable and interminable Evils, and this lower World had been a perfect *Aceldama* of Souls and a meer Scene of Curses, Lamentation and Woe.

If our First Parents had not fallen, yet other single Creatures descended from them might have fallen; and such single Offenders by their Guilt would not only have wounded themselves, but would also with their infected blood have tainted all the Particular Families and Posterities which would have sprung from them. But then sin would have been the disease of none except those infected Families; whereas the Fall of the very first Pair made the Evil Universal. In the Death of *Adam* Death reign'd over all; the very Ordinances of *Generation* and Birth became Mortal and venomous by his Fall: Being the Fall of a *Protoplast*, it was the Fall of the Fountain and Representative of the whole Kind, and therefore a Fall of the intire Species. Now the case standing thus between Man and his Maker; God must either re-

Nature

Nature immediately himself, or create a new First Pair, or find a Remedy for this disaster by a Redeemer, or else a whole class and species of Creatures (and that too the Principal amongst earthly Creatures) must be lost and destroy'd: But *1st*. it was too great an honour for any Terrestrial Creatures of the highest Order, the first Pair being excepted, to be created immediately by God: Besides the first Laws of Creation were settled by too exact a Wisdom to admit of such an alteration of his Decrees. In like manner, it was not convenient for the same reason to create a New Pair of First Parents, nor would this remedy the Evil; for that Pair might fall as well as the former, unless God should take away some Properties, which his first Decrees had made essential to Man, and so endue him with the Gift of a *necessitated perseverance* in a state of Innocence: But this would have been to make a new sort of Creature, rather than to save the Nature which was first made: But his make of that Nature was founded on Directions of Infinite Wisdom, and therefore his having so made it was not to be charg'd with Folly, by preferring this course of Reparation.

Wherefore, forasmuch as the Original Pattern of Gods Creation must be new modell'd and chang'd, which was not fitting to

be done, or an whole class of Creatures must be extinct and undone, unless Mercy interpos'd with the Remedy of Redemption; the bowels of the Glorious God yearn'd over our condition, and found a Remedy consistent with all his Attributes, consistent with all his First Decrees, consistent with the Eternal Laws of the Creation, and with the Laws of all the Natures, which he had fore-ordain'd; and such a remedy withall, as did give a brighter manifestation of his Glory, than the very Favour of Creation it self: For he resolv'd to find a Remedy, whatever it cost him, rather than the Universal Ruin of our Nature should ensue upon the Fall of *Adam*. For the loss of an whole Species of Creatures would have made too horren-dous a Gap in the Creation, if it had not been repair'd; and therefore he had determin'd to make up this Breach in some degree at least. And thus you see how the more diffusive extent, and more dismal consequences of the Fall of Man than the Fall of Angels is attended with, might reasonably be presum'd to incline our Blessed Lord to redeem Men, tho' he did not redeem them: For an whole class of Creatures, who were the Prince of their kind, and the Flower of the World inhabited by them, and who were an Epitome of both the Creator and

the Creation, by the unitement of *Matter* and *Soul* in their composition, was more valuable to be sure (though they were but half Spirit by Nature) than several Particular Angels, whose Nature was intirely Spiritual; because though their Persons were lost, yet their Nature did not perish, nor die with them. He had still Tenthousand, and thousands of thousands of Innumerable Orders of Angelical Spirits left to celebrate his Praises. But our case was otherwise; without the Interposal of a Mediator, *the very Nature* of the Persons that were lost had perish'd with them.

But though these Reasons, and more that might be given, if Time would permit, are sufficient to stop the Mouths, and silence the Cavils of Infidels, which was the only design of my enlarging upon them; yet it must be presumed that our Ignorance of several properties of the Divine Nature, and of the Nature of Angels; of several circumstances of their state of Tryal, and the length of that state, and of several intended future Revolutions of Providence in his Administration of the glorious Worlds of Angels, hinders us of many clearer and more satisfactory Reasons, for the discovery whereof we must be content to wait till we make our entry into the Invisible, and more spa-

cious Scene that is allotted for the Souls of the Righteous; and all these Inquiries and Solutions of our shallow Understandings, and Researches ought to be regulated by the dictates of Modesty and Sobriety. In a Word, Believers ought to acquiesce in the good pleasure and secret Will of the Almighty, as the best reason of all his proceedings in the Government of his Creatures: For, provided we don't suppose any Creatures, whether Angels or Men, to be finally condemn'd by an *Arbitrary Severity*, there is no harm in conceiving some of those who are saved, to be saved by an *Arbitrary Mercy*: For if all Creatures have their Share of those Mercies, which belong to their Nature and Persons in common, we should be very arrogant to expostulate with the Omnipotent Sovereign, about his dispensing his *Prerogative* mercies, as he pleaseth among his Creations.

Nothing now remains, but only to beg your attention to two or three Inferences drawn from the Premises. We find this part of the Mercy-Seat vail'd with the wings of the *Cherubin* as well as the rest of it; to therefore let us leave it: But never let our thinking neglect to adore it with the most awfull Reverence of our Souls; let our highest sense of Gratitude express it self, by breaking forth with one Consent into St.

Paul's

Paul's devout exclamation upon it. *O the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are the Decrees of his Redeeming Mercy, and the ways and benefits of it past our finding out! Who hath fully known the Mind of the Lord; or who hath been his Counsellour* in this great and adorable transaction of his Providence? The good Angels laud our Redeemer, tho' he was not theirs: How much more then ought we to delight in celebrating his Goodness and generosity to us, and to offer up the tribute of our Hallelujahs, as do the Heavenly Choir, with the most rapturous and inflam'd affections!

2^{dly}. Christ's undertaking so much for us, should teach us the Duty of Condescension. He, tho' the express Image of the Father, and ador'd by Angels and Archangels, did not disdain to debase himself by assuming our Nature. How ambitious should be the Great and Honorable to imitate their Saviour, by condescending to the meanest Offices of Courtesy and Kindness? To stoop to do good, is to be like the Lowly and Gracious Jesus. Let that Mind therefore be in you, which was in him, who pass'd by the superior Beings and chose rather to help the low and the inferiour in their extremity.

3^{dly}. Let the Consideration of the Premises engage us to behave our selves like a people redeem'd by the Blood of Christ, who was a Divine Person, and therefore cannot but be a great Lover and Patron of Holiness : The design of his coming was to destroy the Works of the Devil ; to promote Love and Peace ; Good Will and Good Works among Men : Let us accordingly follow after Peace and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord, notwithstanding all that Christ hath done for us. Let us break off our Sins by the Practise of Righteousness, and our Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor. A Wicked Life undermines the attempts of his amazing loving kindness towards us. Oh how ought we to dread all Willful deliberate Sin ? Whatever greater aggravations the first sins of Angels had above the first of Mankind ; This is certain, that since Christ vouchsafed to be born and to die for us, every Sin which we, who have the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour do commit, is loaded with an aggravation whereof the Sin of Devils is not capable ; because we sin against the Mercy of Redemption, which they never did, since none was offered to them : Wherefore, *how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation ?*

A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D before the

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

AUG. 21. 1709.

JUDE vers. the 6th.

Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the Great Day.

SINCE the ways of God with the Children of Men are unfearchable, and all his Judgments, even here below, are a great deep; His Administration of the Heavenly Politicks must be acknowledged to be very mysterious to our Understanding, and the Judgments, which

he hath already executed, or shall hereafter execute upon Apostate Angels, to be perfectly out of our reach to fathom them. However, forasmuch as the Scripture is not perfectly silent upon this Subject, it may claim some share of our Meditation; since whatever is there upon Record about it, is written for our benefit and admonition; provided our thinking steer its course by the Compass of Divine Writ, and within the bounds of Modesty and Humility: Now there is no passage of Scripture more Instructive upon it, than this clause in St. *Jude's* Epistle, which in very plain words doth assure us, that *the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, God hath reserv'd in everlasting chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the Great Day.*

Here are plainly *Three successive States* assign'd to the *Apostate Angels*. First, *A State of Tryal*, in which they misbehav'd themselves, and which is now expir'd; for they are said, *not to have kept their first estate, and to have left their own habitation.* 2dly. *A State of dismal Confinement*, to which they are already sentenc'd, and in which they are now imprison'd; For, they are said to be at present *under chains of Darkness.*

3dly.

3dly. *A State still Future* to them, but certainly appointed for them, and to be enter'd by them, at the beginning of the Final state of Mankind, at the General Judgment; for we read that they are *reserv'd till the Judgment of the Great Day*.

Somewhat ought to be said about each of these States of the Apostate Angels, with Practical improvement of what I shall observe concerning them, as I go along.

First then, from their not having kept their First Estate, &c. we learn that the Apostate Angels had a certain extent of Duration allotted them, by way of Tryal in a former State, which is now expired. When their First state began we know not, because we are ignorant when the Heaven, which they then inhabited, nay, and when they themselves were created. However we know that it was at an end, with one Angel at least, before the Fall of our First Parents: For since good Angels do neither tempt, nor are tempted to Evil in their present Condition, the Serpent which seduced our Unhappy Protoplast was undoubtedly an Apostate Angel, turn'd out of the Probationary Paradise of his Fellow-Creatures. And since we read, in other portions of Scripture, of a Principal Head or Leader of Revolted Angels in their Rebellion, under the Terms

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of *Lucifer* and *Satan*, we may reasonably judge him to be the person, who seduced them soon after their Paradise was formed. 'Tis also probable, upon this Consideration, that at the same time when he fell many others fell with him, nay perhaps all that ever fell, or shall prove at the great Day to have fallen, and were banish'd together from the Presence of God, which is now enjoyed by those Angels, who (notwithstanding the sollicitation of their haughty and usurping Brethren) remain'd stedfast and Loyal to their Maker and Sovereign, submitting themselves with a free thankfull, and unreserved Subjection to his will, which had spoke them into Being, and all those perfections, which made them the Crown and Glory of his Creatures.

Now this actual Fall of a certain Number of Angels doth prove, that the happiness of all Angels, and consequently of those who did not fall, once was forfeitable: for since without doubt they were all governed under the same gracious Laws and Polity, they which did not fall, might have fallen from their first Station, as well as those that did, had they not behaved themselves with humility and deference to the Motions of the Holy Ghost. And yet we have no reason to think, that the happiness of the good An-

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gels is any way forfeitable now; for when the Inspired Writers of the new Testament describe the unforfeitable Glory and Happiness of the Just after the Resurrection, they constantly compare it to the present state of the Holy Angels. Now since it was once forfeitable, but is now unforfeitable, 'tis very plain that the good Angels are in a second State as well as the bad ones; and that both of them have underwent a State of Tryal and Probation in such selfsame, or different Proportions of Time, as God in his Infinite Wisdom thought most proper and sufficient for the said purpose; so that we may reasonably believe, that as the Evil Angels are turn'd out of that Heaven, in which they once were plac'd, and thrust down into a lower Heaven, adjacent to our Earth, whence he is call'd the Prince of *This* Air: so it is as reasonable to believe, that those Angels, which did remain humble and obedient to God till their Term of Tryal was expired, were at the end of it removed into an higher and more splendid Magnificent Heaven; or that if they remain in the same habitation; that same Place of abode is much improved in Glory and delightfomeness: at least their Condition and State of Mind is very much better'd since they are now *there*, or *elsewhere*, secur'd from all Danger of Degene-

generacy, and settled firmly in the favour of God; just as on the contrary, the Door of Grace is for ever shut against the Evil Angels, and their Recovery from their Fall is become perfectly impossible, since their State of Tryal is over, and there is no interposal of a Mediator to save them.

The Remembrance of this Truth that all the Angels, good and bad, have past through a State of Tryal upon their State of Mind, at the Conclusion whereof, their eternal Bliss or Misery did depend; should teach us to acquiesce in God's Disposal of our own Souls in such a State, before he admits us into a more durable and considerable World. What great reason have we to confess his Justice, and to admire his Goodness, who deals by us as he did by Creatures that were so much above us? We have the same treatment, as the Holy Angels have had before us: How thankfully ought we therefore to improve our Probationary Space of Duration, since the Quality of all our remaining Duration depends upon our *Wise*, or *Weak* management of our present share of it? Let us not waste it in mean amusements beneath our Nature; nor in designs and practises contrary to its Prosperity; nor in chimerical Projects above its capacity: Let us not be highminded, but cautious and carefull, humble and

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of diligent in our endeavours to work out our
of Salvation; as remembering that it is not yet
n- attained, nor can be, till this state is at an
is end with us.

te This we may learn from our Reflection
fal on the First Estate of the Fallen Angels:
our view of their *Second* State will still spur
all us on to greater Diligence, for in that which
gh is their present, they are said to be *in ever-*
nd, *lasting chains under Darknefs*. Every one
lifs of these expressions have their distinct signi-
to ficancy: For the *Chains* denote them con-
uls fin'd to some meaner Regions of the World,
o a in such *squallid, ghastly* apartments as are
hae prepared for *Criminals*, perfectly opposite
ce, to those Noble Regions in which they were
by planted before. *Darknefs* is an Inspir'd Me-
tach raphor, used for all kinds of Misery and
as disagreeable circumstances, as Light is for all
ow sorts of Blessings and Prosperity: it denotes
ove them to be already in Torment. The term
nce *everlasting* doth import, that tho' their pre-
tion sent Torments are not quite so exquisite as
age- they will be at *the Great Day*, yet they
not are irreversibile. These filthy and tormented
Na- Spirits will always be filthy and tormented:
rary Their Misery may hereafter be changed in
ects its kind and degrees, but Misery is, and will
ind- be their portion for ever: their Character
and cannot be altered. Misery is already their
dili- por-

portion, and they are moreover under a fearful expectation of Judgment, and a more torturing Fire, which will at length devour all the obstinate Adversaries of God, and Disturbers of his Creation.

O all obstinate sinners, of whatever denomination, look intently upon their Fall, and tremble at the thoughts of your case; submit your selves to God in time, lest ye fall under their Condemnation: yea, we ought all of us to Fear and Tremble at the thought of the *Possibility* of such a Fall. See the Malignity of Presumptuous sin, that could set Heavens on Fire, and transform Angels into Monsters: Oh what self denial, what zeal, what diligence, can be thought too great to avoid such a Misery, such an Unchangeable State of Torments? For we also are capable of falling into such a State, being certainly design'd for a second State: Which second State will be a State of Misery unalterable, if we die in the Guilt of Rebellion against God, and against the Government of Heaven. Sin begins with self conceit, but ends with abasement and shame.

Great persons especially, whether they are so by *Station*, *Wealth* or superiority in Knowledge, should learn from hence to take heed of abusing their Power and Learning to the promotion of ill designs, to the embroiling

broiling Churches and States in Factions and Schisms: for by how much the nearer they approach the accomplishments of Angels, by their *Sphere* or *Capacity*, so much the more dreadful will their Fall, like that of the Apostate Angels prove. Pride, and an ambitious abuse of distinguishing Gifts, seems to have been their crime, in the Prophet *Isaiab's* representation of their Revolt, and my Text plainly hints, that they were most of them Angels of an higher Order, trusted with an authority and an ascendant influence over others; for the word which we render *estate* is *ἀρχὴν*, and might have been translated their *Principality*: and their *not keeping it*, may signifie their Male administration of it; or their affecting an higher Post in the Angelical Polity than God had assign'd them; or a Government perfectly independent upon God, and managed by opposite Laws and Maxims: and their *Crime* is now written in their *Punishment*. And *Satan* for a certain Circle of Ages hath been, and will be some while yet, trusted with a sort of Power, and Kingdom of his own projecting for the honorable tryal of our Fidelity. Hence we read that *Michael* the Archangel treated him as a Prince, tho' a Prince of Darkness, and an Usurper, since he durst not bring a railing accusation against him

him, but only said, *The Lord rebuke thee.*

For tho' those Evil Spirits are turned out of their old Kingdom and the Habitation which God saw (and had they done their Duty, would have made) an ἴδιον οἰκητήριον, a proper Mansion and Receptacle for them, yet they have a cursed Community in the Air adjoining to our Earth, and are suffered, as long as their second State shall last, within certain limitations, to strive to involve the Sons and Daughters of Men in the same deplorable Condition with themselves. And tho' these Wretched Deserters of their First Dignity, for the sake of an *Aiery* Kingdom, of their own erecting, upon the foundations of *Sin* and *Death*, can hardly escape knowing that their Final Misery in their *Third* State, will be increas'd in proportion to the Number of Human Souls which they shall then have seduc'd, and brought over to their party: yet they are always striving to enlarge that Kingdom; and (so far doth Pride and Wickedness infatuate their servile Bigots) they rest not day and night to tempt Souls into such an Impenitent course of Life, as, if not forsaken in time, will certainly ruine them; They take as much pains to ruine Mens souls, as the Good Angels do to enlarge ours and their own Final Glory, by suggesting good Motions to us. Since we

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are the Prize for which there is so great a Contest; since we are the prey which such formidable enemies are in pursuit of; since we are the Treasure which such excellent Beings, as the Holy Angels do so earnestly strive and contend to gain. How much care ought we to take to become the Children of Light, if we are not so already; and to remain such, if we are! O prize your Immortal Souls above all things! Tho' we must wait for Perfect Innocence till we are in another World, yet let our attendance upon the Discipline of Repentance, and the means of Grace, be indefatigable in our endeavours after Holiness, and those nearest approaches to Innocence, that can possibly be attain'd by us here: for if we die in the Devils Possession, we must be for ever and immediately his claim, never to be rescued from his Desperate Fate and Fury. But if when we die, we shall appear examples of sincere Faith, Repentance and Integrity; the Devils may attempt to terrifie our Souls whil'st they pass through the Regions of the neighbouring Air, but all in vain; for *Christ* will send his Holy Angels to guard and comfort us, and conduct us safe into those pleasant Mansions, where the Righteous dead are in satisfactory Peace and Quiet, and wait for the more abundant Consolations

of the Great Day.

And now that I am speaking of the second State of Evil Angels, I beg leave to observe to you the conformity there is between their second State, and the second State of human Impenitent Souls, between *Death* and the *Resurrection*: For as the evil Angels are in Misery, and expect greater at the last Day: so the Impenitent Souls of Men are already in Misery, and that Misery cannot be removed, will not be allayed, but is progressive, and will be far more exquisite at, and after the Resurrection. *Then* the Malignant influence of their evil works, Books, and Examples, as well *after*, as *before* the Death of their Bodies, will increase the *Items* of their Condemnation, at the more solemn united Judgment of Angels and Men. The Works of Wicked Men are said to follow them, not only to upbraid their Memory with the Reproaches of their Conscience, but to increase their Misery in proportion to the mischief which they have done, and continue to do in their own, and this present World after their Death: For separate Souls may in their way vent, and execute their Malice and ungodly designs amongst one another, tho' the manner of it be inconceivable to us.

In like manner there is a Conformity between

between the second State of good Angels, and the second State of Holy Souls. Good Angels, during our first State, labour for our Conversion, under the Conduct of a Mediator; and are subject to the *Mediatorial* Kingdom of Jesus, promote the Interests of it, and receive Confirming Grace for persevering indefectibly in Goodness from his Divine Spirit, and as they now receive the rewards of their fidelity in their former good management of their $\alpha\epsilon\chi\eta$ or Trust; so they now rejoyce at the Conversion of Sinners, not only with a disinterested charity for the sake of the Souls so converted and saved, but in Prospect of an additional Diamond to their own Crown, from the success of their Beneficent endeavours upon the said Souls, which God will give them at the Resurrection; it being highly probable, that at the great Day they will be preferred to some further rewards upon our account, as the evil ones will be sentenc'd to further punishment, for the Havock they have made in the *Human* World.

Now, as 'tis with Holy Angels, so 'tis with the separate Souls of Holy Men in their second State, for they are already *Happy*, and *Unalterably* so: But they have an assured Prospect of greater Glory, at the Resurrection of the Body; and the Degrees of

their Final Glory will not be determin'd till the General Judgment; for till that time the Memory of their example may have some influence upon their Survivers; nay Children unborn, when they did their good Works, may rejoyce in the beneficial consequences of many of them.

Moreover, tho' evil Souls cannot repent or begin to do good works in their second state; for that would be to alter the *Quality* of their Character; which ordinarily and according to the Regular Decrees of Providence can be done only in a State of Tryal, which is always the First State of Beings design'd for more than one; yet Good Souls may improve their Character, by practising Beneficence among one another in a way inconceivable to us.

What abundant encouragement have we therefore to be patterns of Good Works, since God is pleas'd to reward them in two Worlds, and since we shall not wait for Happiness till the General Resurrection, tho' we shall wait for the Consummation of our Glory till then? We shall immediately be possess'd of transcendant pleasure, by being present with the Lord and the Spirits of the Just made perfect, as soon as ever we are absent from the Body, and our Souls shall have launch'd into the Ocean of Eternity: But
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above all we have the highest encouragement to be Benefactors to the Publick in that way, for which Posterity will call us Blessed ; since this kind of Liberality never fails to do good to the Living, and to accumulate honour and advantages upon the Dead, from the Day of their Death to that of the General Judgment and Resurrection of Mankind.

The mention of this time naturally leads us to the Consideration of the Third State of Wicked Angels, for which they are said *to be reserved*, and in which they shall be instated at the great Day : For tho' they have already pass'd through a *Private* Judgment, which hath conclaſs'd them with their eternal Companions, and sentenc'd them to a State of Misery ; so that the Quality of their Character, by their banishment from their first Heaven, is unalterably settled ; yet they are to be condemn'd ; and do expect the said Condemnation in a more solemn manner, before Angels and Men, to several new degrees of Misery. This is the *Abyss* of which they are so much afraid, and the ground of their asking Matt. 8. 29. *What have we to do with thee Jesus, thou son of God? Art thou come to torment us before our time?* It did not imply that they were free from Torments then, but reserv'd for greater hereafter ; when all the mischief they have done to Men shall be added to

their old Demerits, and sink them down into the most intolerable extremity of Anguish; *the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* O, I beseech you, let a serious thoughtfulness upon the great Judgments already inflicted upon them, and the greater that will fall upon them hereafter, stir us all up to a due awe of the Righteousness and Purity of God! and let these Terroures of the Lord work upon us to make our Peace with God, by the strictest Repentance, and Diligence in well-doing. For if *God spared not the Angels, who were so much greater in power and might, but cast them down to Hell, and deliver'd them into chains of Darkness, to be reserved unto Judgment;* how much less will he spare sinful Men, after a long abuse of Probationary Mercies, whose foundation is in the Dust?

Let us often meditate on the Dreadful scenes of the great Day, since we shall be concern'd in it as well as the Fall'n Angels. For tho' the Judgment, which is pass'd upon the Souls of the Wicked instantly after Death, puts an end to the period of their particular tryal, and fixeth the quality of their Character for ever; yet there will be a more solemn Sentence pass'd upon both Soul and Body, by the Judge of the Quick and Dead Christ Jesus, which will adjudge them

them both, as Partners in wickedness, to conjoint punishment, and settle the determinate degrees of it Ages without end: for then will be the Harvest of the World, which will separate all the *Sheep* from all the *Goats* for ever, and the *Chaff* from the *Wheat*. For tho' Holy Souls were conclass'd together before then, and Wicked also in their second State; yet there will be, till that compleat regulation of all things, some *Holy* and *Wicked* Souls, mix'd together in a first State, just as the Tares are suffered to grow with the Wheat, untill the Harvest: But after that Day; all Holy Souls, nay all holy Beings that ever were, are, or shall be gathered and assembled together with God and his Holy Angels in Final Glory; and all Wicked Beings, not one excepted, shall be thrown together into an abyss of Misery with the Devil and his Angels.

The *Romanists* abuse this *Simile* of the Chaff from the Wheat, when they would pervert it to imply, that good Souls and bad Souls are mix'd together in a middle State, between Hope and Fear, till a Final Judgment. No, our Saviour, in the use of it, plainly alludes to the State of good and bad Men in their first State. For the Souls of good Men, and the Souls of Wicked Men, are some of them in their second State,

whilst others of them are still in their First; and some will remain in their first State, even till the General Judgment, and consequently till then some good Souls will remain mix'd with bad Men, like unwinnowed Wheat with the Chaff. But nevertheless 'tis otherwise with good Souls in their second State; they are consoled with Souls of their own temper, and no other; and so it is with the Bad. They too are consoled with Souls of their own Complexion and no other.

Oh, as we dread to be their associates in their Punishments, let us beware of being their associates in their Crimes. Let the terrible Day of the Lord be often in our thoughts, for whether we think of it now, or not, it will come, and, when it doth, it will appear to be a Great Day.

That will be a great Day indeed, when the loftiness of Man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of Men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted; in which the mightiest Princes, and the most Stout hearted Sinners shall go into the holes of the Rocks, and into the Caves of the Earth for fear of the Lord, and for the Glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the World, and they shall, with the utmost Consternation, cry to the

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Mountains fall on us, and to the Rocks to hide them from the Wrath of the Lamb.

That will be a great Day indeed, in which the Heavens being on Fire shall be dissolv'd, the Elements melt with a fervent Heat; and the Conflagration of Vast Structures shall new cast them in Flames, and produce a *New Heaven*, and *New Earth*, in which dwelleth Righteousness; for the Heavens which are now are kept in store, reserv'd unto Fire against the Day of Judgment and Perdition of Ungodly Men.

That will be a great Day indeed, in which shall be the revelation of the righteous Judgment of God; which shall discover the secrets of all hearts; which shall raise up the dejected Heads of the Righteous with great boldness and Joy, and arm the Conscience of the Wicked with all the proper ensigns of its once despised Authority, to execute the Lord's vengeance upon them, with ten thousand two-edged Swords not held in vain, but slaying the Souls of bold offenders, as fast as the Angels shall reap them, in a moment, in the turn of an eye.

That will be a great Day indeed, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his Mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of the

Lord

Lord Jesus; who shall be punish'd with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power; when he shall come to be Glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. For then, with the exactest Justice and Proportions, he will render to every Man according to his Deeds; to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, he will render Glory, Honour, Peace, and Eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, he shall render Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth evil; for their is no respect of Persons with God. All will be spectators of the Tryal, and Judges of the proceedings; for the Saints shall Judge Angels, and all Angels, high and low, shall with all Men confess, and give Glory to the equity of the Dread Tribunal, crying aloud, *Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and Righteous are thy Judgments.*

That will be a great Day indeed, in which the Sea shall give up her Dead that are in it, and Death and Hades shall deliver up the Dead that are in them, and be cast into the Lake of Fire; when all, whose
names

names were not found written in the Book of Life, shall be cast, with the Devil that deceived them, into the same Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and they shall be tormented Day and Night for ever and ever.

That will be a great Day indeed, when the transactions of so many Thousands of years, and of so many Myriads of Beings shall be adjusted and compleated; and the Disposals of Providence in so many Worlds shall be made clear and manifest, and appear to be most just, uniform and beautiful.

That will be a great Day indeed, in which the great White Throne shall be erected; the Lord and Maker of all Worlds shall sit upon it, the Heavens and the Earth flying away from him; the Dead, small and great, shall stand before him; and the Books of Life and Conscience shall be opened, and the Dead judged according to their Works out of them.

That will be a great Day indeed, when the Tabernacle of God shall be with Righteous Men; when he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his People; when God himself shall be their God, and they shall see him as he is seen by the Elect Angels, and know him as he is known by his Heavenly Domesticks. Then shall that Communion be held with God, which is a *Mystery*
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to the *Best* Men, a *Paradox* to the *Wicked*, the *Hope* of the *Heavenly*, and the *Heaven* of the *Triumphant*.

If *Felix* trembled at the thoughts of a Judgment to come; How much rather ought we to do so, who have a far clearer discovery of this great and notable Day of the Lord: How should we dread to be found unprepared for it: How devoutly ought we to behave our selves towards God: How Just and Charitable to our Neighbours, how circumspect in the use of Animal Refreshments! How sincerely and how exemplarily Penitent for all our failures in any of those several Articles of our duty! For if we continue to sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remains to us a certain fearful looking for of Eternal Judgment; when a Fire will burn before, and a Flame devour behind us. To all it will be very terrible for a time, but most so to the Impenitent. O who can abide it or stand against the Anger of the Lord? For to the Wicked our God is a Consuming Fire.

Seeing, my Beloved, ye look for such things, what manner of Persons ought we to be in all manner of Conversation; how diligent in our endeavours to be found of God in Peace, without spot and blameless? Looking and hastning unto the coming of the Day of God. *Amen.*

A S E R-

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D before the
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,
On the Feast of ALL-SAINTS 1706.

HEB VI. ‡ 12.

*Be followers of them, who
through Faith and Patience
inherit the Promises.*

THIS *Scripture*, and this Day;
offer the same Contemplation to
your thoughts; all the brightest
Examples of Virtue in that class of
Beings we our selves belong to; their Divine
temper and Conversation; and the rewards
and felicity of it, together with an exhorta-
tion pressing us to Copy out their Graces,
that we may share in their Glory.

Saints deceased, (for of such the Text
speaks) may be considerd in their *Past*, their
Present,

Present, and their *Future* Capacity. * The *First* of them is their State of *Faith* and *Patience*, and 'plainly refer'd to by the mention of those Virtues; the *two other* States comprehend their happy Eternity, in which they are said to *inherit the Promises*, and will naturally steer our Meditations to that point.

Wherefore in pursuance of the *Apostle's* intimation, the most preferable Order of thinking upon the Subject before you seems to be what I have pitch'd upon; which is *1st.* to view them in their *past* and *former* State, to which we our selves are still confin'd. *2dly.* in their *present* State. *3dly.* in that *Final* and *most perfect* one, whereof they have a *prospect*; and which is no less *future* to *them* than it is to *us*.

First, let us think upon the Character of the Saints in that World which is *past*, and over with them, and whereof we are still Inhabitants. *This* the Text calls their State of *Faith* and *Patience*.

FAITH here seems to be a *General Term*, denoting that *Divine* Temper of Mind, which of course accompanies a *firm* and

* Advertitis tres esse sanctarum status animarum, primum videlicet in Corpore corruptibili, secundum sine corpore, tertium in Corpore jam glorificato: primum in Militiâ, secundum in Requie, tertium in Beatitudine consummata. St. Bernard Serm. c. 7.

settled belief of a *first Cause*, of the *Immortality of our Souls*, and of the rewards design'd for good Men in a future State, upon the account of some Mediator, conceived by them able to make their *imperfect* but *sincere endeavours* after Virtue acceptable to God. To omit other places, the word *Faith* plainly implys thus much throughout the whole *eleventh* Chapter of this Epistle.*

PATIENCE also seems to be another *General* Term, for the entire practice of Virtue in our *Visible Conduct* and demeanour: For as there are degrees of Patience; so it is very evident that every Act of Virtue in the present World is an higher or lower degree of Patience.

Every action that *justly* deserves to be

* I put the belief of a Mediator into the Definition of that Faith, which the Holy Ghost here ascribes to the Devout Patriarchs and Jews (who are referr'd to in the Text no less than Christians) because the oblation of Sacrifices, both among the Jews and Heathens, implied their Notion of the necessity of a Mediator; and that there were one, or more Mediators by whom acceptance and favour was procured to their imperfect Virtue and Repentance. Those indeed among the Jews, who were more devout and thoughtful, had much clearer notions of this Truth; tho' not such Compleat conceptions of it as Devout and knowing Christians have. But as most of them worship'd an Unknown God, so they had only a darker sense of an Unknown Mediator, that handed our addresses to the Supreme Majesty, and others of them run into a Superstitious conceit of a Plurality of Mediators as well as of Gods: The Pagans Worship of Demons, and the Jews Worship of Angels, was a Worship of Mediators.

called *Good*, includes in it a *Grace* and a *Virtue*, which are essential to the perfection of it's goodness. The *Grace* is first in the Order of Nature, which lays the foundation of it in a divine frame and disposition of Mind, from which it derives the Principal part of its excellency; for the design and intention of it is seated here; now the *Intention* of every Act is the first property from whence it takes the proper Denomination of its Quality. The *Virtue* of a good Action consists in the *execution* of a pious purpose, and the performance and practise of those works and duties, which a Mind enlightned, and sanctified by the spirit of God discerns to be excellent, by their being conformable to his Will and Laws; and such as do become Creatures of our Rank and Nature, who have a sense of God and an expectation of a blessed Eternity. The *Grace* is the *Soul* of a *Good* action; the *Virtue* is the *Body* of it. Both of them together are the *Pure Religion of the Mind*, expressing it self by the *Religion of the Manners*: and both of them are as essential to the Perfection of *Human Goodness*, as both a Soul and a Body are to the Perfection of a *Man*. Now *Faith* denotes the *former*, and *Patience* the latter. But to speak more *particularly* of both.

First then I say *this* State is a *State of Faith*. Good Men here look further than their *Senses*; nay further than even *Reason* alone can carry them, in many Articles of belief, and Acts of Duty and Self denial. Their thoughts and desires carry them beyond the narrow Confines of the Creation, and dwell most intently upon the supreme Cause, whose Generosity spoke them into being. His favour is what they principally court: Upon him they fix their love and dependence. Their aims and endeavours are laid out upon the pursuit of a nearer sight of his perfections, and a more intimate acquaintance with him.

In order to this they use all the most expedient means of improving their Understanding, with an increasing knowledg of the Nature of God; that they may polish and beautifie the temper of their Minds, with a conformity of disposition to the mind and Will of God, as far as it can be known and transcrib'd by such limited Powers, as they perceive those of their own minds to be. They perceive, that whenever this World was produced, it must have been produced by *Wisdom, Power and Goodness*: They discern some fainter Ideas and Capacities of these Perfections, to be imprinted in the Ground-work and Contexture of their own

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Thinking Principle; and, upon the use of requisite diligence and application, to be improvable to greater and greater Degrees, so long as they continue their endeavours after a progress in them. This Consideration puts them upon *Earnestly, Sincerely, Chearfully, and Perseveringly* endeavouring to improve their Powers and Capacities in the *said* Perfections.

And forasmuch as they must necessarily know, that the great Producer of themselves, and every thing else, doth most abound in them; they cannot avoid preferring an imitation of God, as far as his Nature can be copied after by Spirits of their Sphere, before all other expedients of improving their Minds in such Perfections. All those Divine tempers, which are *necessarily* included in our exactest Ideas of the Great Creator, can't but be *Perfective* of created Minds so far as they can be invested with them. If, for instance, *Benevolence*, and a *Communicative* and *Charitable disposition*, be found upon inquiry to be one of those tempers; that temper must be *Divine* and *Ornamental* in Man: If a *Preference* of the *Public* to a *Private* Interest be another of those tempers; this temper must be *Excellent* and *Praise-worthy* in Man: If a kind regard for the welfare and flourishing

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Condition of *Spirits*, more than for the Subsistence of *Material Beings* be another, it must be a *Divine* temper in Man to prefer the ease, satisfaction and welfare of his Soul, before the present interest of the Body, whenever they stand in Competition. In a Word, to name but one more; If an eye to the Final settlement and Constitution of the Universe, and all the several Members of it, in the Eternal Scene be the Director of God's Disposal of the Circumstances of his Creatures, in those transitory Scenes which are preludes to it, being another Disposition essential to a Just Idea of the Creator, this must also be a *Divine* temper in any of his Creatures that are capable of an Eternity and of *two* Interests; one whereof is *subordinate* to the other. For since it is essential to a Creator to prefer the Law, course and tendency of his own excellent Nature, Will and Conduct before all Law, Will and Direction in the whole World, it must be a perfection in every Creature to prefer the Creator's Will before his own; to make it a Pattern to his own; to be pleas'd with the visible Beauty of most of his works; to submit to, acquiesce in, and be fully persuaded of the excellency of those parts of his *Will* and *Administration*, which are more obscure and unaccountable to us at

present: For tho' the Regularity, Beauty, and *beatific* tendency of all the Rules of the Gospel, and of all the Disposals of his Providence, are not so conspicuous to us, as that of some of them are; yet they will be equal hereafter in that Respect with those, that at present are most obvious to our Reason. This is *to be one Spirit with the Lord*; to be *Partakers of a Divine Nature*, as far as our imperfect Nature will already admit of it; and still to be more and more thirsting, and following after that fuller and more affecting sight, and enjoyment of the Deity, wherewith our exacter likeness to him in another World will bless and replenish our enlarged Souls. For as *God* is most properly called *Perfection in General*, tho' our Finite Understandings conceive him by a Multiplicity of distinguish'd Attributes and Ideas; so Grace in Man, being a Resemblance of the Unoriginated Nature, doth descend from it, and is one simple, pure, and uniform Principal in a sanctified Heart, tho' it is conceived by Parts, by reason of its different expressions of it self, on different occasions, and in the diversified Circumstances and Duties of Human Life. 'Tis a new Nature, an uniform Heavenly bent and byass of Mind, continually travelling with a great and noble Desire after the same
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great end and object of hope, tho' it appear various and party-coloured in the several effects and influences of it, upon the Innumerable variations of our outward Conduct and Conversation. The Virtues which it produceth are but several *links* of one and the same *chain*, and are join'd together by the same Artist.

'Tis the same Heavenly Disposition that actuates a good Man in the Discipline and austerities of *Repentance*, and the delightful offices of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*: The same Divine Nature which breaks forth into rapturous extasies of Devotion, and sets bounds to them too, lest they seduce into Vanity, or prove more vehement than the frailty of an Earthly Fabrick will bear. That which dictates *Reverence* and *Gravity* in sacred Solemnities; and that which condescends to the *Innocent gaieties* of extraordinary seasons, when a reserv'd and forbidding Air in our aspect would be the greatest breach of *Decorum*, ariseth from the same principal of Faith. Faith is not ornamental of only one, but of all seasons and conditions of Life, in its superintendency over our Conduct; and prescribes every Duty impartially in its Time and Place, prevailing with all that are animated by it, to perform them all in their allotted

courses and just proportions : It knows when to *reprove* and when to *congratulate*, when to be *austere*, and when to be *facetious*. It can bear any trouble but *Guilt* (for of that it is very impatient) and which is more, it can bear Prosperity too. Wealth and High Stations make no one insolent in whom it rules, nor Adversity mean and abject. It shews *Deference* to *Superiours*; is open, clear and friendly with *Equals*, easy of access to *Inferiours*. It makes Men careful for their own, and the necessities of their Families, and liberal to the wants of others too: easy and resigned in disappointments and thankful in Success. It shines by doing some good in little Stations, pours down blessings in Floods upon *Kingdoms* and *Posterities* from great ones, is turbulent and uneasy in none. 'Tis sincerely strict in *Secret*, and exemplary in *Public* Worship. It puts *Vice* and *Crimes* to shame, and covers *Frailties* and *Failings* with a veil of Candour. An obliging and forgiving temper is inseparable to it: It is very moderate in its own freedoms, and makes no invidious comments on those of others; but puts a kind Construction on all words and actions that will bear it. It can quietly part with Life in the *best* circumstances, and wait for Death
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in the *Worst*. It distinguishes Duties but never sets them in opposition; for tho' it hath *two* hands, it hath no *left* hand, and always has but one face: Its design is ever great and honorable; for *God*, the *Universe*, *Eternity* are the beginning and end of it. Now what can give a Nobler Theatre of Views? A mind so principled is God's Picture in miniature, and lives a life superior to the experience of those who are not animated in their Conduct by the Guidance of Faith.

But I must proceed to consider this present State of the Saints as a State of Patience, which is a product of the foresaid Faith. Although the Virtue of good Men, in this World, is a weak and contemptible thing, if compared with what it will be, when it shall be unalterably vigorous and secure; yet there are two Particulars, which do as it were aggrandize it, and render it more illustrious than the Virtues of the *Triumphant* State; namely, first the dependence of our Eternity upon it, since the *Immutable* World takes the Nature and Quality of every ones condition in it, from their *final* behaviour in the present World, and is determined by it. Another Property of our Virtue here, which adds lustre to its Character, is its being supported by an in-

cessant bravery of Spirit ; for, unless Courage and Magnanimity were inseparable to it, here it could not be crown'd with a continual series of Victories : But nothing is more evident than that Virtue *here* is the product of Daily Conflicts with *Opposition* on the one hand, and of Watchfulness against *Seduction* on the other.

For tho' it is not the part of every Virtuous Person to shed his blood in the cause of Religion, yet he ought to be furnish'd with a sufficient stock of Resolution to do it, in case he should ever be brought into such a strait, as that he must either part with *Life*, or *Integrity*. Now whoever will choose rather to lose life than Integrity, to be sure will much more readily suffer some lesser inconvenience, whether it be *Disgrace*, *Shame*, *Reproaches*, *Poverty*, or *Imprisonment*, rather than give his Heart occasion to reproach him for betraying his Trust, or committing any thing base or villainous. For can we conceive that any Person who dares defie Death in its most terrible shapes, so far as to lay down his Life in a bed of Flames, will not easily renounce the lures of Honour and Interest, whenever they shall solícite him to act against the Will of God, or the Safety of his Church, Prince or Country, and the Peace
and

and Quiet of his own Conscience?

But this Branch of *Heroic Piety*, being peculiar to the case of those Famous *Martyrs* and *Confessors*, whom we commemorate with the *First* degree of Veneration on this *Festival*, I shall offer some more *Common* and *Familiar* Instances of Virtue, which of course include some degrees of *Patience* in them. Professors of Virtue are either in *easy* or *hard* Circumstances: If they are in Circumstances which are disagreeable to Creatures that are cloathed with Flesh and Blood, their Resignation and Contentment under them (which is a necessary part of Virtue) implieth Fortitude and Patience in it: If they are in a Plentiful and Splendid Condition, they are continually beset with those temptations which are most formidable to a *Christian Spirit*; I mean the temptations of Grandeur and Prosperity; for these are the most dangerous of all others, inasmuch as they are both more *importunate* and more *insinulative*. The *Sun* in the *World*, as well as in the *Fable*, generally gets the better of the *North-Wind*. Pride and Luxury have the easiest access to our Hearts; They undermine and often destroy before our Danger is discerned: Self-denial in such a Case is somewhat more than Self-denial. 'Tis a great tryal to be surround-
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ed with the allurements of affluence and splendour; and at the same time to controul all the irregular sallies of our sensual appetites. Scripture represents such Mens entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, by the practise of Mortification, as more than difficult, comparing it to the passage of a Cable thro the eye of a Needle; and some Antient Writers have compared the rigid and resolute Virtue of *Joseph* and *Moses*, in an *Egyptian* Court, with the merits of *Martyrdom* it self; judging it somewhat greater to *live* than to *die* a Martyr. Their case was a *Fuge Martyrium*: No Martyr so great as the *Continual* Martyr.

In a Word, the Life of every sincere Christian is a warfare against a great number of enemies; some of them very *Potent*, and others very *Politick*. Virtue is a rich Prey; rescued narrowly out of the Fire; the purchase of Labour and sweat, of care and vigilance: We are too liable to lose it by our own sloth and treachery: Our worst enemies are often those of our own household: Our own inclinations are the seeds of most Vices, and lay the first Stone of Hell within us; and therefore without Patience, in all the Stages of Duty, Virtue can't have its perfect effect, nor Grace its full efficacy. By this we are instant in Prayer, do good

to the Unthankful, as our Maker and our Saviour have done before us, endure the hardships of Spiritual Soldiers, subdue Lusts and Passions, quench the fiery-darts of the Devil, and hold on to the end.

The Virtue of Militant Saints, being a very frail and imperfect thing, hath been likened to a grain of *Mustard Seed*, which is the least of all seeds, and would be more frail unless guarded by Humility, and a constant course of Discipline: We have not yet attained; He that standeth must take heed lest he fall; and when we fall we must take pains to recover our selves: He must know himself thoroughly, and therefore examin himself frequently: He must grow in Grace, for else he will relapse into his former Corruptions. *Elijah*, *St. Paul*, and other Saints were Men subject to the same Passions; but by Prayer and Abstinence, by Meditation and repeated Acts of Virtue, they got the Victory over *themselves* first; and over the *rest* of their spiritual enemies afterwards. We must be made perfect through some sort of sufferings or other, as the Captain of our Salvation, and the glorious Host of his Followers were before us. They were approved in much tribulation, in Necessity, in Distress, in Watchings, in Fastings; and we must shew the same diligence

ligence with full assurance of Hope unto the end, or else we shall not receive the end of our Faith, in the salvation of our Souls. Which minds me of my second Head; and that is to take a short view of Saints deceased, considered in their *Present*, and the *Second* State of Righteous Souls.

Tho' good Men are dead to us, they are more alive to God and to themselves than they were before: The *Bodies* of the Saints are indeed mouldred into Dust; nevertheless their *Souls* are in *Being* and in *Bliss*. The Soul doth not vanish with the *Animal* life into senseless Air. That which *thinks*, and *resolves*, and *governs*, and *compares*, and *reflects* upon innumerable Objects, how distant soever in *Space* and *Duration*; That which lodgeth the whole Creation within it self in an instant, and unites contrary things there without Disturbance; That Principle in Man which discerns a God in the World, and is great enough to entertain not only an *Idea* but an *Hope* of Immortality; That which controuls Lusts and Passions, and hath too strong a stress of Desire to rest in any thing beneath the enjoyment of its Maker, cannot be *Matter*, (call it Spirit, or what you please else) for we see Matter is plainly *Passive*; and all the Motion whereof Matter is capable is too confined in its operations,

tions, for the Prodigious efficacy and Productions of *Thought*, to be solved by the force of it.

Wherefore, since it can't be Matter, it need not die with the Body, nor cease to live when that ceaseth to breath. Nothing short of God's Omnipotence can reduce the Soul into nothing, at the dissolution of our Material Fabrick: But we know him too well, both by *Reason* and *Revelation*, to suppose he would employ his Power in destroying the most curious piece of all his Works here below. There are too many masterly strokes of Art in it, to allow us, with the least shadow of Reason, to imagine it made only for a days Continuance. We know nothing more clearly of God than that he is a Lover of Holiness, and designs it a reward first or last. Now the Virtues, whereof eminent Saints are examples, cannot be rewarded by the Crowns, or Scepters of this Life, or an uninterrupted torrent of Prosperity in it: But to be sure, those Afflictions which befall the best of Men in this World, in the Lottery of their outward Circumstances, must much rather refer our thoughts to some remoter scene, for the Rewards of their Piety. Indeed there is something so shocking in the bare supposal, that the Soul of Man is Mortal; that were it

it possible, it could be as true, as it is undoubtedly false, a generous and prudent Man would scorn to believe it. Affectation of Wit and Novelty may tempt some Men to write for it, against the invincible dictates of their Conscience to the contrary; And *Vice* is very much interested in it: But the Persuasion of our Immortality is writ, with such durable Characters upon the Powers of the Soul, that no Man, without Quenching the Light of Reason, can erase them so far, as to hold out long against this evidence.

Our very Notion of an Immortal Duration bespeaks us capable of, and design'd by the bounty of our Maker for it. He that hath not given the meanest instinct to the most inferiour Creatures in vain, cannot justly be conceived to have given Man the Noblest of all Desires, only to disappoint it. No, we may depend upon it, good Men deceas'd live more properly the life of Souls than they did before; and the better Men are, the more fully they will be satisfied of this truth; for Virtue banisheth all mean and degrading jealousies, which level vicious Souls with Brutes.

Accordingly we are assured, that the Righteous Dead are not only in a State of *Indolence*, where they rest from their labours, but in a State of *pleasing activity* and

and fruition; for they are said *To be with the Lord; to see God as he is seen, and to know him as he is known*; to be delighted in praising him more than they were here; because they now converse familiarly with their Maker; know more of his *Perfections, Works and Counsels*; and consequently are struck with a more pleasing admiration of them: Their Love is more fervent towards him; and it is answered by brighter Irradiations from their God.

In their past World they encountred with fore temptations and trials; *without* were troubles, *within* were Fears. One Part of their own Person was an incumbrance to them, and often a Traytor, unless they kept a strict watch upon it. That State was a State of Faith: God and eternity were seen, but by distant and languid views: But now they are all Spirit, Pure thought, without any tincture of Imagination; all over eye and apprehension: The Glass is cast aside, for the object is near enough to be seen, and the faculty strong enough to discern without it. The loss of their Bodies deprives them of no sensations, but those which imply *Sin, Pain and Infirmary*; and those are abundantly supplied with a vast addition of Joyous Ideas, peculiar to the experience of that State; For such we have no expressions, because

because we can have no experience of them.

And as their Conceptions of the most refined Objects are neat and clear, and independent on the use of coarse and blunt Organs of Body; so their Will is strait and perfect, always exactly corresponding with the *Will* of eternal Goodness; a perfect and unerring Law to it self; fixed unalterably in the best State and Temper, intirely Divine in its choices and desires; which alone is a Heaven, as God is to himself, tho' it depends upon God's Will, as a lesser Orb centers with a greater and always follows its Motion; so that the Soul is there pure Love, full of security and delight, and as happy as Wisdom, and Innocence, and Charity, and Devotion in their highest Elevation can make it.

Thus Blessed are those that die in the Lord; and can we have no share of that blessedness in this Life? Undoubtedly we may, if we will grow in Grace, and so ripen our Faith into Plerophory: Hope and Gratulative Charity makes their Joy, tho' hitherto unexplicable our own in part. By these Graces we hold correspondence with the Saints above. *Meditation on their Joy

* Cur non properamus & currimus ut patriam nostram videre possimus? Magnus illic charorum numerus expectat;
keeps

keeps our Spirits from sinking under pressing Afflictions, and we need not doubt but that they don't cast off all concern for those who survive them: For, as when the Storms below terrifie and surprise, we can't help sending a wish to the Shore, and fetch comfort by turning an eye towards that Port; so I doubt not but our blessed Fellow-creatures often wish, that they saw us possessed of the same Joy with themselves, and do receive an accession of Joy, whenever they can congratulate the safe arrival of others into the blessed Regions, in which they are seated. Let us then remember that we are Combatants for such Crowns, as they are already possess'd of. We are Denizens of the Heavenly City, tho' at present but sojourners in a distant Province; *Heirs*, tho' not *Inheriters*, of the Promises: If we hold fast our Faith and Patience we shall e're long enter the Joy of our Lord.

But I must beg leave to advance something of that *Third* and *Final* State, whereof the Saints deceas'd have a prospect, and which

Parentum, Fratrum, Filiorum frequens nos & copiosa turba desiderat jam de sua incolumitate secura, adhuc de nostrâ salute sollicita. 181 *Serm. de Tempore*: Si igitur cum sanctis in æternâ vitâ Communionem habere volumus, de imitatione eorum cogitemus: Debent enim in nobis aliquid recognoscere de suis virtutibus, ut pro nobis dignentur Domino supplicare. *ibidem*.

is no less future to them than it is to us, and that will begin at the General Resurrection, when the Just shall be cloathed with perfect Beauty, both in Body and Soul.

The *Separate* State is a State of Bliss; But the World of the Resurrection is that only, which in strict speech can be called the State of Glory: for then the whole Composition of their Nature will be glorified. I have neither time nor ability to shew all the advantageous properties of *Celestial* Bodies: I must therefore be content to observe in General, that they will be active, pure and beautifull; no clog to the Soul; no temptation to Impurity, not liable to Death, or the necessities of a Mortal State.

The World of the Resurrection will be compleat, because it will be unchangeable, and is to be succeeded by no other State; as two others were before it: It will be the Consummation of all things; enter'd and enjoyed by all the Saints at once: The last and perfectest State of all must answer the *Original* Composition of our Nature, which consists of a Body as well as a Soul; however the Being of a separate State shews the Soul to be the principal part of Man's Nature.

Souls drop into the separate State at different times, and pass unequal proportions of
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Duration in that, as well as in their State of Tryal. But all have the same proportion of Duration, in the last and compleatest World of the Saints: For those before were transient, and all transactions in them were managed and overruled by measures, which had a respect to the fix'd and consummated State of Persons and Things. God hath provided for Saints deceased a *Κρείττον π.* a better State; and therefore they can't be made perfect without us, because they can't be so till Human Nature hath received its full Complement of Souls; and Birth, and Generation, and *Death* have finished their allotted course. Then all *Probationary* Capacity will be at an end, not only with *Particular Souls*, but with *Mankind* in General. This then must be a *Populous* World. Then will be the Celebration of the great Harvest, spoken of in the Parable of the Reapers, when all God's Elect shall be gathered into his Garner; and partake of the Glorious accommodation, which he hath prepared for them. What a transporting sight will this be at the solemnity of the Marriage of the *Lamb*; when all the Spirits of the Just made perfect, a great Multitude, which none of us can number, of all Nations and Kindred, and Tongues, and Ages, with Palms in their Hands, and Crowns on

their Heads, shouting forth *Hallelujahs* like the sound of many Waters, and the voice of many Thunders, shall join their Harmony with Angels and Archangels, and all the Glorious Choir of Innumerable Heavens in the Highest!

In Prospect of this Glorious *Celebrity*, let us learn some of the Language of that Divine Place, as we are taught it in the *Epistle* for the Day, saying,

Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb.

Blessing and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might be unto our God for ever and ever ; Amen.

A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D before the

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

June the 22. 1706.

I JOHN I. 5.

— *God is Light.* —

LIGHT taken in a *literal* sense can't give us a Just Character of *Deity*; for 'tis but a Body and inanimate Matter, tho' more Glorious than any thing else of that Kind: But St. *John* has elsewhere told us, *God is a Spirit*, that is, a Mind, or Being, which hath nothing of mixture or matter, no not any of the finest sort in it. However, in a *figurative* sense, it is both a proper and a *lively Illustration* of several *Attributes* of God. For Light is a thing abounding in good Properties.

It cheers, it strengthens, it enlivens, it nourishes, it irradiates, graces and adorns all the works of God: It ennobleth all Innocent Beings, and their designs, by placing them in an agreeable and exemplary view; and it defends them too, by putting to shame both the Works and Workers of Iniquity, by driving them with Monsters into Dens and Desarts. Whenever therefore any word which signifieth Light is used for a *Metaphor*, it doth always denote something excellent and acceptable in the Person to whom it is applied: It is a rich Vein of innumerable allusions, but all of them gracious and recommending; and for this reason it is so very applicable unto the First cause; since all the instances of its Beneficence are but a shadow of the Beneficence of its Author. 'Twas upon this Consideration, without doubt, that one Philosopher conceived, that if God should ever think fit to make himself visible to Mankind, he would choose *Truth* for a *Soul*, and *Light* for his *Body*; and that another, when he was ask'd *for what he was made?* answered, *to contemplate the Sun.*

And 'tis certain *Inspired* Writers use it oftner than any other sensible thing besides, for a more *condescensive Representation* of the First cause to the shortsighted Capacity of Incarnate Minds. There are few of
God's

God's Attributes, which somewhere or other in their Writings, are not compared to it, and the Delightful Blessings which flow from it: They are too many to be summed up in a *Sermon*, and 'twere a needless task, if it might be done, to attempt it in this Learned Presence. Wherefore laying aside all vain endeavours of enumerating the various significations of Light, in the figurative use of it in Scripture, in order to a competent explication of my Text; I shall only First *explain* and *prove* the *general* assertion of it, so far as Light, in a large extent and latitude, is a faint resemblance of several unnam'd Perfections of the Deity, by the beneficent effects of it: and 2^{dly}, in a more *restrained* Sense, as it relates to some single Perfection of God, which our Apostle hath here more particularly in his eye

First, I say this assertion, *God is Light*, may be taken in a general extent and latitude, so far as Light is a faint resemblance of several unnamed Perfections of the Deity, by its beneficent effects upon the Heavens and the Earth, and the innumerable Inhabitants and Productions of them. Now the Truth of this assertion, taken thus in a larger sense, is very apparent. *Knowledge* and *Wisdom*, *Holiness* and *Clemency*, *Ver-*
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racity and *Goodness*, and several other Perfections allowed by all to be infinite, and unspotted *in* and essential *to* Deity, are faintly resembled by Light; for the diffusive course, and serviceable efficacy of it among *Corporeal* things, bears some correspondence to the native properties and benign effects, which those Perfections have upon *Minds*. And what *Light* is, and seems to do in the Sphere of *Matter*; that *God* more Powerfully is, and more really doth, in the Moral World and more stately Universe of *Mind*. For as the World of Bodies without the *Former* would be depriv'd of all its Beauty and Order, and be nothing but an unsightly horrendous *Chaos*; so without the latter all Thinking Substances of a limited and depending Nature, which hath no firm Centre and Foundation of Happiness in it self, (but such we experience our own to be) would be but an *Hell* to themselves; a mere scene of perplexing Fears and Anxieties, destitute of Stable Comfort for the present, and of all Hope and pleasing Prospect for the future. *Thought*, now the *Glory* and *Pride* of their Being, and a perpetual *Eden* and spring of Delight, would upon such a ghastly supposition prove but a curse to them, and every Conscience be unavoidably an ill one; Perfect fury and a Turbulent

lent Sea of restless, vexatious, and self-tormentful Passions. Horreur and Darknes would seize upon all Souls in common, could they live in a World, neither made nor govern'd by a God: For what can Souls acquiesce in but *Power, Wisdom and Goodness*? And to what purpose should they rest, and stay their hopes and endeavours on a *Finite* Power, Wisdom and Goodness like their own, nay, or any finite excellency of other Beings, tho' never so superiour to themselves; supposing it were not supported by the infinite perfections of some supreme Lord and Governour of the rest? Since any Power short of Infinite in it self, unless propp'd up by Infinite, seated somewhere else, must be suspected to fail the aspiring flight of such Thoughts and Passions, as the Spirit of Man can entertain. Besides, the Spirits of Nobler Beings above may be presumed to entertain greater aims, and expectations than ours can. And what Wisdom, short of infinite in it self, provided withall it be destitute of the Direction of the Infinite Wisdom of some foreign Being, can be secured from erring in its pursuits of such Schemes of Happiness, as the Principle of Thought within can forge out of its own Ideas of Futurity? Nay further, what Goodness that is neither infinite in it self, nor
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relieved by the generosity of some better, and greater Being than it self, can we think will prepare for us a State of Bliss and Glory, answerable to that Plan of Felicity, which can be drawn by Human Imagination? And that too, when its strength is not most *vivid* and *sanguine*, but almost at the lowest Ebb: And yet the reach of the lower and natural Fancy measures by a very short Line, in its utmost and *farthest* Prospect, when compared with such views and draughts of Glory and Happiness, as lie fairly described in the purer conceptions of the Devout; and are suggested by the refin'd experience of Proficients in Grace and Virtue. A Principle of Divine Love creates a sort of new and sublimer Sensations in their Souls, even here below. And were it consistent with that Patience, which is inseparable from the Virtue of *Militant* Saints, and the necessities of Gross and Animal Bodies to do it, (which in Duty they are bound to recruit, as long as God will have them to sustain them) they would loath the highest delights, that are peculiar to this World; and scorn some Acts of which they are the result. Now what Goodness, Wisdom or Power, tho' but a few degrees short of Infinite, can possess them of an Heaven, high, large and bright enough to bound their Ambition; or
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stock them with such delicious entertainments, as might please and regale so fine a taste, and fill such Godlike and extensive desires? By whom should these Heaven-born Souls be fully enlightned, but by him which dwelleth in the Light, which no Man can approach, and hath inexhaustible Fountains and Treasures in his Gift and Disposal? This, this Great Being can't but be, in every sense and import of the allusion, the Light of all Conscious Beings; who alone is the Father of them, who first lights them into the World, and still upholds throughout the several stages of Life, as long as they are in it; and conducts them, when they leave it, into a delightful Region, where they will be endued with larger Capacities, conceive brighter Ideas, and be affected with more numerous, lasting and pleasurable sensations, piercing the inmost Root of the best and most generous passions of their Nature. He that endued Light, and arrayed it with all its Beneficial and Ornamental Properties; he that made its Particles so conformable to the pores and texture of the Eye; he that is the occasion of so many entertaining Ideas to the *thinking* and *sensing* Principle of Human Nature; he without whose kind concurrence neither Body nor Soul could receive so much benefit from it; he who is the
Source

Source of all fymmetry in Bodies, and of all Joyous fenfations in Mind; he that made the whole ftately Theatre of Souls and Spirits, doth alfo keep up their Beauty and Joy, by his replenifhing prefence with the Nature and Being, which his gracious Power hath beftowed upon them: and as it is not our own *Planet* only, or thofe neareft in fituation to ours, that is adorn'd and refresh'd by Light, but the whole Face of Nature, throughout all the Systems which God hath made; fo all the Inhabitants of the *remotest* Systems, as well as thofe of the Heavens which immediately cover us, and thofe of the Earth which we breath and tread in, are cheer'd and beautified, by the prefence of God, in different proportions and degrees, according to the diversified manifestations of himfelf, which he is pleas'd to vouchfate to the feveral Claffes of Created Minds, and to diftinct particular Members of it. For *upon whom doth not his Light arife?* Is there any Number of the Armies that are fustain'd and encourag'd by it? In vain would *Angels* and *Archangels*, and all the brighteft Hofts and Hierarchies on high, pretend to fubfift and flourish without it: For were not God a Sun and Shield to them no lefs than to us, all their Joy and Splendour, all their Dignity and Glory would
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vanish in an instant; and they would unavoidably sink into everlasting Anguish.

This being sufficient to be said upon the assertion of this Scripture, taken in a general extent; let us proceed next to consider it in a more *restrained* signification, as the Term *Light* relates to some particular Perfection of the Deity, which our *Apostle* seems here to have most in his Eye.

Tho' as I said before, I have not time to assign and specify all the Senses of this Term of Light, when applied to God by Inspired Writers; yet since there is no framing a fix'd and Methodical Discourse out of an *indeterminate* Sense of the *allusion*; it will be convenient to take notice of the most *frequent, obvious* and *prevailing* Senses of it in the tenour of Divine Writ; that we may the less rashly acquiesce in *some one* Sense, which shall upon Inquiry appear to be the Principal, and most probably design'd by St. *John* in this place.

Now Light in Scripture is often used concerning God in the Sense of defence and Protection; because Vigilance and Care usually begins and ends with the seasons and intervals of it; often in the Sense of an *Ornament*, because Light displays the Beauties of Nature; often in the Sense of *Purity*, forasmuch as Irregularity, Deformity, Disguise,

Disguise, and all the Works of Guilt, shun the discovery and conviction of it, and court the shelter of Night and Darkness; often in the Sense of *Comfort* and *Exhilaration*, our spirits being observ'd to be briskest and most lively in the Day-time; often in the Sense of *Sincerity*, *Truth* and *Veracity*, since it deprives Imposture and Hypocrisy of Opportunity to succeed in deceiving. Nevertheless, it is *oftnest* of all asserted of God, in the acceptation of the *Metaphor* for *Knowledge* and *Understanding*, from its first Property of making things clear and manifest: *That which maketh manifest is Light* saith St. *Paul*.

Accordingly it seems here to assert God to be a Being of Infinite Knowledge and Understanding: *God is Light*, as if he had said, *God is Knowledge and Truth it self*; as appears from the subsequent words, *In him is no darkness at all*; that is, no Error or Ignorance; no mists of Prejudice; no mixture of Incapacity; no dullness of Apprehension; no precipitancy of Judgment; no defect of Memory; no backwardness to Think or fatigue in Thinking; no obscurity in Expression; For he is all over *Eye*, *Penetration* and *Thought*, ever clear and serene.

In Discoursing upon this Perfection of
God's

God's infinite Knowledge and Understanding,
I shall

1st, Consider the genuine properties of the said Perfection.

2^{dly}, Examine what other Perfections must be *concomitant* with it.

lastly, Represent the influence it ought to have upon the Conduct of our Lives.

First, I shall take notice of the genuine properties of an *Infinite Knowledge and Understanding*. Now these are.

1st, To comprehend all *Things, Persons, and Agents*.

2^{dly}, To extend to all *Duration*.

3^{dly}, To reach all *Space and Place*.

4^{ly}, To penetrate all things and persons, throughout all the Tracts of Space and Duration, *with the greatest ease and indisturbance*, by Virtue of a boundless extent and amplitude, essential to an Un-originated Being, in whom the fore-conceived Infinite Understanding is seated.

The first genuine property of an Infinite Understanding, is to comprehend the Numbers and Natures of all Things, Persons and Agents. He knows our frame: The essences of things, which are retired from the scrutiny of both our Thoughts and Senses, lie dissected before that all piercing Eye, which searcheth and surveyeth their most intimate

intimate Substance more clearly than we do their Figure and Surface. And tho' his Creatures are innumerable to us, they are not so to him; for the very Hairs of our Head are numbred, by him who calls the Stars and the Angels by Name: For he spake the word and they were created, and 'tis because he is strong in power that not one of them fails: so that none of the diversified parts of the curious structure of created Beings, whether Visible or Invisible, can escape his notice; for their whole frame was modell'd by the Ideas of his eternal Mind: wherefore he can't but be well acquainted with all the springs and wheels of all Natures, and the intire *Mechanism* of his own Power. His works, are unsearchable to Finite Minds, but not so to his own: For every Artist knows his own handy-work; much more then must the Great Creatour of Worlds and Souls throughly comprehend all, even the most subtle, mystical and minute parts, operations and properties of all those things which he hath wrought. If he did not, he could not be perfect in Knowledge; nor be qualified to look down from Heaven to behold all the Sons of Men; and to observe all the Inhabitants of the Earth from the inaccessible Glory of his Dwelling; nor to search all those

those Hearts, which he hath fashioned alike; nor to consider all their Works, nor to weigh them in the exact Ballance of an unbyassed Judgment: But the Scripture assures us, that he will bring every Work unto Judgment with every secret Thing; whether it be good or evil; and that the Divine Λόγος is quick and powerfull, and sharper than any two-edged Sword unto the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrows [Nerves ἀρμῶν] and is a discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart: Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened [πεπρακλισμένα, *anatomised*] before him, to whom we are to give an account of our Conduct. A 2^d. Property of Infinite Knowledge is to extend to all *Du-ration*. *Known to God are all his Works from the beginning*: 'Tis hence that his Counsel stands fast throughout all Generations; that he ever did, and ever will fulfil all his Pleasure. God's power of accomplishing the Prophecies of his Word, and Messengers, hath an inseparable dependence on this property of Infinite Knowledge. What is only *possibility*, or at best but *probability* to us, is *event* in God's sight. No transactions that ever shall be, tho' they be never so strange, complicated, and unaccount-

able at the time of their appearance to his Creatures, are contingent or surprising to himself; for they were all seen by him, before they were done, in all their Causes, Occasions and Intricacies; just as the Figure of a Plant or a Tree might be seen in its Seed, by an Eye fine enough to discern it. They were all ancient Facts in the Theatre of God's fore-knowledge. Strictly speaking, *Fore-knowledge* is a Term which doth not suit with the Perfection of the Divine Understanding; but it is a condescensive expression to our Capacity, denoting God's certain, instant, and punctual Knowledge of many actions and things, which are future to his Creatures. For the Knowledge of Creatures is gradual; and to them the *Drama* of Providence is display'd, by a broken succession of Parts; the Infinite Understanding is not like a finite Understanding, whose imperfect Capacity obligeth it to divide Duration into *Past*, *Present* and *Future*: I say it is not thus with the Understanding of God; there is no division in his Duration; no process in his views, no progress in his Knowledge: For all Duration, Actions, Things and Persons are equally present to the Infinite Mind: He sees not as Man sees, nor knows as Man knows: He grasps all objects with one continual view, distinctly

ally without confusion, and without distraction. *History* and *Remembrance*, *Prediction* and *Event*; *Faith*, *Sight* and *Science* give us a *different*, nay sometimes an *opposite* Representation of the same things: But God's Ideas of all things are as one Idea, simple and uniform, from everlasting to everlasting: He is the First and the Last, and can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.

A 3^d. Property of Infinite Knowledge is to reach all *Space* and *Place*. If there could be such an Infinite Void, as *Democritus* and *Epicurus* fancied, it would be all and every Point of it plain and level to the Capacity of an Infinite Understanding: And tho' the extent of Space can't be infinite in it self, because (if, as it needs must be, it be a thing distinct from God) it was created, and is inclosed within determinate bounds prescribed by its Maker; yet it is so vast and diffusive, that it is beyond the *Geometry* of Men, and perhaps of Angels, to measure it with their Thoughts, or to assign bounds to, I will not say, the whole, but even to any of the larger Divisions of it; so that it hath the Air of *Infinity*, to the view of Man, and must be allowed to be *Indefinite* to our conceptions of it. For our

Contemplation cannot ascend the Scale of God's Creation from the lowest to the highest of his Works: The Height of it cannot be surmounted, the Depth of it is unfathomable, the Breadth of it unmeasurable, the Bulk of it incomprehensible, and the Number of the Orbs, of which the whole stupendous Fabrick is composed, is beyond our Computation: But they are all contained in the Infinite Understanding of God. His mind comprehends all those Magnificent Worlds, with a distinct notice of all the delicate Strokes of Counsel and Beauty, which shine in the Symmetry and Proportions of its several parts, and the Harmony and Agreement of the whole Combination of things; so justly did the *Jewish Rabbies* style the Creator *Hamâkom*, because he is the Noble Place and *Expansion*, which encircleth the Universe within it self, and in which all things subsist; for, as saith the Prophet, *He fills Heaven and Earth. In omnibus infusus & circumfusus Deus, ut cuncta penetret interior, & contineat exterior*, is St. Jerome's Comment upon it; *God is so poured forth in all things, and round about them, that he is more within them than themselves, and yet he surrounds the outermost part of them: He is within all things, without being inclosed in them;*

them; and without them, yet not excluded. In *Minutius Felix* we find a parallel passage; *Non solum in Dei oculis, sed in sinu vivimus*; we not only live under the Eyes, but in the very Bosom of God. *Seneca*, tho' an Heathen, had some sense of God's Omnipresence, for else how could he have spoken of God, as follows; *Solus est omnia; opus suum & extra & intra tenet*; He alone is all things; He possesseth his Work both within and without. No wonder therefore that so Divine a person as *St. Gregory* speaks thus magnificently of God. *Deus sic intendit omnibus, ut assit singulis; sic adest singulis, ut simul omnibus nunquam desit: sic itaque exteriora circundat ut interiora impleat; sic interiora implet, ut exteriora circundet; sic summa regit, ut ima non deferat; sic imis praesens est ut a superioribus non recedat.* God so superintends over all things, as to be at the hand of every thing: and yet his being so near to particular things takes him not off from inspecting and governing the whole Universe: He therefore so surrounds the outermost things and places, as at the same time to fill the innermost; and his filling the innermost do's not hinder his encompassing the outermost. He so governs the highest, as not to forsake

the lowest; nor do's his Presence with the lowest render him at any time absent from the highermost.

The Eloquence of Inspiration hath an inimitable Majesty, when it speaks of the Magnificence of the *Architecture* of God, and the *Immensity* of that unbounded presence which upholds it: *Where wast thou when I laid the Foundation of the Earth? Declare, if thou hast Understanding: Who hath laid its Measures, or stretched the Line upon it? Upon what are its Foundations fastned? Who shut up the Sea with Doors when it brake forth? Who said to it, hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy Proud Waves be staid? Hast thou commanded the Morning, and caused the Day-spring to know his place? Hast thou entred the Springs, or walked in the search of the Depth? Hast thou seen the Treasures of Hail and Snow, reserv'd against the Day of Battle and War? Have the Gates of Death been opened unto thee, or hast thou perceived the Breadth of the Earth? Where doth Light dwell, by what way is it parted? Who hath divided a course for the Waters, and Wings for the swift passage of Lightnings and the Winds? Who hath the Heavens for his Throne, and the Earth for his Footstool?*

stool? *All Nations before God are as Nothing, and the Inhabitants thereof like Grasshoppers in his presence: For he knoweth our down-sitting and our up-rising, and understandeth our Thoughts long before: He compasseth our Path, and is acquainted with all our ways; for he takes up Isles as a very little thing: He measureth out the Ocean in the Hollow of his Hand, meteth out the Heavens with a Span, weighs Mountains in his Scales, and Hills in his Balance: He stretcheth the North over a Void, and hangs the Earth upon Nothing: Before him Hell is naked, and the Receptacles of Hades have no covering.*

The Royal Psalmist is so admirable upon this Topick, that it would be a kind of Sacrilege to omit saying after him. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I take the Wings of the Morning, or dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea; even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right Hand shall hold me; If I say surely the Darknes shall cover me; the Night shall be Light about me; yea the Darknes hideth not from Thee, but the Night shineth as the Day; the Darknes and the Light are both alike to Thee.*

A 4th. Property of Infinite Knowledge is to penetrate all things and persons, throughout all tracts of Space and Duration, *with Ease and Indisturbance*, by Virtue of a boundless amplitude of Being, essential to the Nature wherein it is seated. Be it how it will with *our Minds*, His to be sure always thinks; For the Watchman of *Israel* never slumbreth nor sleepeth. The Distinction of *Act* and *Faculty* hath no place in an infinite Mind: It wants no cultivation to improve it; nor is its Knowledge the effect of Laborious Study, or built upon borrowed Ideas; but Essential to him, Inseparable from him, Eternal, Necessary and Un-derived as his Being. As he *created* all things with a *Word*, so he *knows* all things with a *Look*.

No Body spreads farther or quicker than Light, and yet its passage is without Pomp or Noise, without Trouble to it self, or to the Bodies surrounded by it. Thus God's Knowledge is the most Extensive and Intuitive, without difficulty within himself, or assistance from abroad. The Light of his Knowledge searches quicker and more intimately than the Sun doth ransack the material World. *Longinus* was transported at the account which *Moses* hath given us of the Creation of Light. But could he have had a Mind
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large enough to comprehend, with its Author, the Production and amazing Efficacy of it, he must have been much more pleas'd with being privy to its Formation, than with reading that admirable account of its Original. For the Fact to be sure was transcendently Nobler than even an Inspired-Description of it: and 'twas the Greatness of the Fact described that gave such Spirit and Lustre to the plainest Relation of it.

For imagine your selves made and planted in this World, unacquainted with all those Sensations, which by God's appointment take their rise from our present acquaintance with it, tho' freely partaking of other Sensations; I say imagine your selves in this Condition, and present at its first entry, as soon as God hath spoke it into Being, and commanded it with a prodigious swiftness to visit the whole Frame of Nature in an Instant; and then conceive, if you can, what transport and amazement must have been the result of your first, and till then perfectly unknown Images of *Colour, Form, Beauty and Proportion*? Would not your Thoughts, upon so new a Representation of things, be dilated like the Light that caus'd it? And your Pleasure grow upon you with your Prospect? What Tides of Joy and Admiration must spring up in your selves with
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the surprize of Sight? Would not your own Persons be as Strange to you as the World you gaze at? How suddenly would you be lost in a mazeful Wild of Beauty and Charms! With what a variety of attractive objects would your devouring Eyes be carried away Captive? How would wonder and astonishment fix your Bodies like Statues! At least those of others would seem such to you, whilst you felt Life multiplying in your selves, and the raptures of a thousand Souls in one! How would the out-goings of the First Morning and Evening set forth the Glory of God before your Minds, as fast as the strange circuit of the Light was displaying the Beauties of the Creation to your Eye! With what a profound veneration for its Authour would it strike you! With what Anthems of Praise and Thankfulness to him would it inspire you? Had this I say been your case you can't forbear; but like the Morning Stars ye must sing Hallelujahs together, and with the Elder Sons of God be shouting for Joy; and yet this so Joyous, so Glorious an appearance, were but a faint emblem of that *celerity* of Understanding, with which God searcheth all things without disturbance, I say all things without disturbance; for tho' it sees Iniquity, yet it contracts no Uneasiness, or Impurity

rity in the Deity; no more than the Rays of the Sun can be defiled by the stench of Filth on which they fall. God's Knowledge is not the Cause of the Sin which he seeth, nor his presence the Cause of the Pain which the Sense thereof excites in the Guilty, according as it is more or less increased: But as the Putrefaction of some things makes them disagreeable to the Rays of Light, and so their stench is drawn from their corrupt Texture by the force of the Sun; so the contrariety of a bad Conscience, to the Pure uncreated Nature, is the foundation of uneasiness in indisposed Minds, at the manifestation of God's presence to them here, and will be an Eternal Fund of it within them in the next World, because God will unavoidably and forcibly be discerned by them. When the Scripture represents God annoy'd and grieved by the sight of Sin and ruined Creatures; the design of it is only to shew the Contrariety of the Divine Nature to it; and the meaning of such figurative expressions is, that if God were susceptible of Grief and Annoyance, the Wicked and their Wickedness would certainly be a Cause of it. Fire can't but burn combustible matter applied to it. Light can't but expose, and consequently displease, wickedness and deformity, in the same way of operation,

ration, as it delights and sets off Innocence and Purity. God's unavoidable Presence makes the Heaven of the Blessed, and the Hell of the Damn'd, and the Degrees of its manifestation increase the Glory of the Saints, and the misery of Reprobates; for so you know the same Sun, which invigorates whatever is green and flourishing, scorches and shrinks up that which fadeth and degenerates.

I am now come to my *second* general Head, wherein I am to shew what Divine Perfections are included in God's Infinite Knowledge, and necessarily consequent to it: Now these are *Wisdom*, *Purity* and *Veracity*.

First, God's *Infinite Knowledge* includes *Infinite Wisdom*. For *Folly* is owing to the choice of a mean end or design in the actions of our Conduct; or the preference and use of improper means in the pursuit of a good and wise design. But since God knows all things, he cannot but know the best Scope of action, and the most fitting means to be applied, in order to the attainment of the most commendable drift and intention. Accordingly the designs of God are the most generous, lasting and extensive of all, and the ways by which they are compassed and brought to effect, the most prefer-

preferable for his purpose, tho' they exceed our ways as much as his thoughts do our thoughts, and are often an inextricable Labyrinth to our inquiries, when we presume to try to trace them.

2^{dly}, *Purity and Holiness* is another necessary attendant upon Infinite Knowledge. The Purity and Holiness of any Being, consists in a free and fixed disposedness to do those things, which tend most effectually to the Conservation of its own Dignity, Strength, Peace and Safety. Now Infinite Knowledge must have this influence upon its Owner, because it gives him the fullest and most lively sentiment of all Natures, and consequently of his own, and that in such a sprightly, cogent, and affecting manner, that he must know and prefer that Conduct, which is conservative of his own most excellent Nature: and for the same Reason, God, as he is necessarily Holy himself, must be an Encourager of all others to be Holy too.

3^{dly}, *Veracity* is a necessary attendant upon Infinite Knowledge. Beings of a bounded Knowledge many times promise things which they can't perform, because of some unforeknown future incapacity of the person to whom we gave our Word; or some other surprising accident after the promise, which

which barrs its performance: But a Being of infinite Knowledge is not a Man that he should lie; nor will he make any promise of which he need to repent, who promiseth nothing, but what it may be consistent with the future State of things and persons for him to make good, to the hopes and expectations of those who depend upon it.

The *last* thing I proposed was, to represent the influence, which the Consideration of God's infinite Knowledge ought to have, upon our Practical Conduct. *First* then, It should make us abhor all Guilt and Hypocrisy, and make Sincerity amiable and dear to us. For a God that knows all things is not to be mocked, but must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth. *2dly*, It should excite and encourage us to be fervent and sedulous in devout applications to God, both in our own pursuit of Knowledge for our selves, and our endeavours to communicate Divine Truths to our People. *Erasmus* read some of St. *Paul's* Epistles whenever he set about composing any Divine Discourses; let us therefore have recourse by Prayer to the same Divine Spirit which inspir'd St. *Paul*. If any Man lack Wisdom of any sort, but especially Divine Knowledge, let him ask it of God the Father of Lights and Author of Illumination, for
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he giveth liberally and upbraideth not: *In his Light we shall see Light.*

Finally to conclude, what can be more apparent than that it should beget in us an awful dread of God's Omniscience, and Omnipresence: For this is the best Preservative against Guilt, because it hath always the same Force and Power, and makes us most curious in preparing our selves for the Final Sentence of the great Judge of Angels and Men. A Temptation, tho' at first very formidable, and arm'd with irresistible Aires of Pleasure or Terroure, no longer appears invincible when we oppose the Sense of God's presence against it: This question, *how can I do this great Sin against God, who is of purer Eyes than to connive at Iniquity?* will quickly make it weak and perish. Since then the Eyes of the Lord, which are ten thousand times brighter than the Sun, do always run to and fro throughout the Earth; since they are in every place, and privy to all our demeanour; since not so much as a thought can be withholden from him; how ought we to guard our behaviour with Circumspection at all times? Even in the most secret places remembering that none are so to God. Were it possible, our very thinking should be Immaculate; that not a word of our Tongue, nor one action of
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of our Lives, might provoke the Eyes of his Glory to dart Flames of Vengeance against us; for what will the Hypocrite's Hope avail, when God takes away his Soul? But Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God with amazing Comfort, who sees their Conduct with Favour and Delight.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse our hearts by the Inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee; and worthily magnify thy Holy Name, through Christ our Lord.

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D at

St. JAMES'S-CHURCH in WESTMINSTER,

In the Morning;

And St. PAUL'S-CATHEDRAL,

In the Afternoon.

GEN. I. 27.

*God created Man in his own
Image:—*

WHOEVER considers the infinite distance there is between the Nature of *God*, and the Nature of *Man*, must be very much surpris'd at the first reading of this passage of Scripture: and yet what *Moses* tells us here, in the account of the Creation, is confirm'd by St. *Paul*, and several other *Divine* Writers, who frequently assert it, and as frequently allude to it.

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Wherefore one thing, and the *first* which is proper to be done, in discoursing upon these words, will be to state the true Meaning of them. Accordingly I shall *first* shew *how*, or *in what Sense*, Man is said to be created in the Image of God. *2dly*, wherein the Image of God, upon the Nature of Man, doth consist. *3dly*, I shall make the *close* of my *Discourse* as *Practical* as I can, by some observations, which will naturally arise from an orderly Reflection on the two former Heads.

First, I am to shew, *in what Sense Man is said to be made in the Image of God*. Now 'tis certain that these Terms of *Image*, *Likeness*, *Similitude*, and such like expressions, when applied by *Sacred Writers* to the *Divine* and *Human* Natures, cannot possibly denote a *perfect correspondence*, much less any sort of *equality* between those two Natures.

The design of *Inspiration* is to give us the *loftiest Conceptions* of God that our limited Understandings can possibly hold; which without doubt would be perfectly defeated, if any Phrase or Passage of Holy Writ were so far misunderstood and perverted, as to occasion a belief of a compleat Likeness, in any respect, between the great Creator and any of his Creatures. The Highest of all created Natures cannot pre-
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tend to it, without the grossest Ignorance of both God and themselves; much less can ours, which is very much below the Highest, tho' it is the Principal Nature among those ranks of Creatures, which people this *Inferiour* World, to which at present we do belong. The glorious Hosts above are eclips'd in his Presence, and veil their Faces before him; how therefore can Man exalt himself to such a Likeness with his Maker, whose Foundation is in the Dust?

There is such a copious Field of *Thought*, and *Scripture* for the discouragement of such presumptuous conceits of our Nature, that a very small acquaintance with *either*, will force all such Vanity to disappear, as soon as ever it begins to appear within us. *Behold God is Great, and we know him not: Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend: With God is terrible Majesty: He putteth no trust in his Saints: Is there any number of his Armies? Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out: Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, yea the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than*

the Sea. If thou be Righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thy Hand? Thy Righteousness may profit a Man as thou art: But can a Man be profitable to God as he that is wise is so to himself? Is thy Wisdom or thy Holiness Gain to Him? These are the expostulations of one Inspired Writer. The Divine Rhetorick of another comes yet nearer to the purpose. Hast thou not known; Hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his Understanding: To whom then will ye liken me or shall I be equal saith the Holy One? King David makes the same Challenge with the Evangelical Prophet, and grounds it on the same Consideration. Ps. 89. Who in the Heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the Race of the Mighty can be likened unto God? O Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? But when he compares the infirmity of our Nature, and the follies we commit in it; he breaks forth into very devout expressions of his awful Sense of the Divine Majesty, and his own amazing distance from him; Lord what is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou dost so constant-
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ly visit and regard him?

If therefore *Scripture* is to be explain'd by *Scripture*, if the *difficult* passages of *Scripture* are to be explain'd by the *easy*, *figurative* by *plain* ones, and *few* passages by *many*; all these that I have cited do clearly shew, that this Phrase of *God's creating Man in his own Image*, must not be taken in too *literal* a Sense. The *Holy Ghost* in *this*, as in other parts of his gracious Dialect, condescends to the shallow Capacity of our Minds, in this their present State of Infancy; and therefore, tho' we meet with it several times, we are here reminded over and over, that it imports nothing inconsistent with a due sense of the vast disproportion that there ever was, and ever will be, between the Divine and Human Nature. Indeed if we take the words of the Text to be a *Prophetic intimation* of the Incarnation of the Blessed Jesus, when the Second Person of the Godhead was pleased to tabernacle in our Nature, the literal sense may be better accommodated to our most reverential thoughts of the Divine and Uncreated Being; and then the ascribing *Eyes*, *Ears*, *Hands*, and other parts of the Body to God, in the Language of the old Testament, was really just; upon the account of his astonishing Abasement of himself, when

he humbled himself so far, as to be made in the Likeness of the Bodies, as well as of the Souls of Men. But tho' that venerable Transaction of Providence makes the Text literally true, by the event to us, and was foreseen by God from eternal Ages to be so; yet I must confess the Context will not determine that to be the *primary* Sense of it, and that which *Moses* had in his thoughts when he wrote it: For *Moses* speaks of a thing past, and before Man was in want of a Redeemer. Wherefore the Words must be taken not in too *strict*, but in a *restrained* Sense.

By Man's being made in the Image of God we must understand, that the Nature of Man makes nearer approaches to the Nature of God, than the Nature of any other Earthly Creatures. Man is so much above the other Inhabitants of this small Spot of God's stately Creation, that compared with them, he may be call'd the Image and Likeness of God: He has a brighter resemblance of his Maker, than all other Creatures put together. As *Angels* do excell *Men*; so doth Man his Fellow-Creatures. God whom no Creature, or Saint of our Order, can see in his Essence, and that most Glorious Light which no Man can approach, is discernible, as to the effects of his Attributes, through

through the meanest of his Creatures. Every thing proves and preaches his Being, and publisheth his Praise, and all of them declare his Glory. And thus, and only thus, we discern God in our own Frame and the Operations of our own Person. Nevertheless, as there are degrees in the *Clearness* and *Glory* of *reflected Light*, according to the different *situation, texture* and *properties* of those Bodies, which reflect that Light towards us; so it is in the case before us. The *reflex Glory* of God appears better and brighter in our selves, than in the other Parts and Creatures of this lower World: And there is so great a difference between the Footsteps of his Divinity, which are imprinted on his other Works here below, and those Rays of God which are reflected from our Contemplation of our own Nature; that compar'd with them, we may without *Immodesty* speak, as the Spirit of God doth, when he calls *Adam the Son of God*, the Heir and Prince of the World, and condescends to say, that Man is created after the Likeness of his Maker, and is the Image and Resemblance of himself.

I hope you will excuse my being thus *cautious*, and *verbose* in explaining this Head, since 'tis owing to an earnest desire of guarding our thoughts against so

vain an opinion of our Nature, as would derogate from our Just apprehensions of God's Nature and Majesty; and I hope, that what I shall say upon my next Head will sufficiently satisfy you, that I am earnestly desirous of your having a due Sense of the Dignity of your own Nature. In order whereunto I proceed 2^{dly}, To shew wherein the Image of God, upon the Nature of Man, doth principally consist.

Now this I presume doth consist in those Characters of Divine Grandeur, which appear in his Sovereignty over all the Creatures: what *God* is over the *World*, and *Princes* over their *Subjects*, that is *Mankind* in general over all those Creatures, which are the Objects of Sense. Thus every Man is a Prince, and a Viceroy of God. I think the *Context* bears me out in it, if I cannot help being positive in this *Opinion*. For thus when the *Historian* represents God, consulting with himself about making Man, we read *verse* the 26th. of this Chapter; *And God said, let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness, and let them have Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over the Cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing, that creeps upon the Earth.* It follows *So*, or *Thus*, that is, by giving him

him this Authority, and wherewith to uphold it, *God created Man in his own Image*. His right of Sovereignty over the Creatures being grounded on this declaration of Scripture, and further his being called the Image of God, being grounded on the said Dominion; the most satisfactory illustration of the Likeness of Men to God, will be drawn from the survey of those Properties of the Nature of Man, by the due exercise whereof he doth maintain, and assert his Superiority over his Fellow-Creatures.

Now tho' a particular view of the exterior Form of Man might afford us a very entertaining Contemplation; and oblige us to confess, that in this respect, *Man is fearfully and wonderfully made*; yet 'tis very evident that Man doth not so universally excell other Creatures in the Endowments of his Body, (since some are *stronger*, others *swifter*, others more *sagacious* in their outward Senses than Man) as to allow us to place the Ground-work of his Sovereignty in that part of his Nature, unless we consider it under the Direction and Superintendency of an higher Principle, which we call his Soul. Wherefore the *Mind* of Man will appear to be the best Theatre of Meditation, for the proving his relation to Heaven, and the impress of the Divine Nature upon
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the Composition of our own. This I shall do, by comparing the Operations and essential Properties of the Mind of Man, with three short Characters of God, given us by the Holy Ghost; and shew how these, in some Sense, render *Man* an adumbration of God, and do *principally* and *alone* qualifie him for maintaining his Sovereignty over his Fellow-Creatures. Now the Scriptures tell us, that

1st, *God is a Spirit.*

2dly, *God is Light.*

3dly, *God is Love.*

The *first* of these Terms denotes *Power*, for it is often opposed to *Flesh* which is *Weak*; the *second Knowledge* and *Wisdom*; the *third Goodness*: Now upon enquiry Man, *when regenerated*, will be found to resemble God by some faint Strictures of all these Perfections.

And *first*, we read that *God is a Spirit*, that is, a being of Infinite Power, discernible in innumerable effects to our Senses, and yet the Object of no Sense in himself, but only perceptible to pure Mind and Thought: The manner of his acting is secret to us; but that he doth continually act in the World, is every where, and always evident: We can discern his Person neither any where, nor in any things: However we are fully
satisfied

satisfied of the Universal Presence of an Uncreated Being and Nature, which is not far from us, and in whom we live and move, and have our Being: For we know, and plainly see that the things, which are the Objects of our Sense, must have had a beginning, and that they could not have it of themselves. All the Matter and Beings in the World, with which we visibly converse, is evidently of too feeble a Nature, either to create a World, or to preserve their own single Subsistence. Hereupon our thoughts must unavoidably have recourse to a Retired, Invisible and Unoriginated Being, who works in and about us with an amazing, incessant and unwearied activity, and is intimately present in all things and places, tho' he is confined to none, nor manifest to our grosser Senses any other way than by Works and Effects: These indeed are discernible to our Senses: But it is the Mind only, which through these Windows discovers the Necessity of some Active, Secret and Incomprehensible Worker, whom we call *God*. And as his Works prove the Necessity of the *Work-Master*, so the *Secrecy* of his operation *in*, and upon all things, the Diffusiveness of his Presence, the Wisdom and Goodness which his Works declare to be in him, plainly shew, that this Divine Artist can't have any such mean

mean and impotent Principle, as what we call Body and Matter in his Person and Being: but must be Immaterial and Incorporeal, that is, in one word, a *Spirit*; a producer of Matter; and a Being that hath all Matter at command; but is himself a *Pure Mind*, or an *Understanding Will*, of an Infinite Extent and Goodness; comprehending all things, without being comprehended by any; nevertheless such as may be apprehended by Beings, who are endued with a Principle of Consciousness, Thought and Reflection. Now in this Notion of *Immateriality* there is more than a *denial of Matter*: for it ascribes several *positive* Properties, which no *Material* Being either hath, or can have, and so far it defines a Spirit by essential Operations; tho' the *Essence* of Spirit is unknown to us; that is no argument against its *Existence*, since the *Essence* of Matter is unknown too.

Now if we reflect carefully on our own Nature, we shall find an adumbration of God's *Spirituality* in our selves, and such as is a faint Image and Glympe of his. For tho' his *Spirituality* doth as far exceed ours, as his ways of acting are above ours, and as his thoughts are beyond our thoughts; yet we experience such a Conscious and Thinking Principle within us, as we plainly discern

discern is neither of so confin'd a Presence, nor so bounded and mechanical in its Operations, as not only our own but, all other Bodies are: for our *Minds* traverse the Starry Regions on High, when our *Bodies* are tied to the Earth, and want Wings to fit them for so great a Flight. This vast difference between the *Presence*, *Locality* and Operations of our Minds and Bodies, (for what Hand can work with the Quickness of Thought) plainly demonstrates the *Area* and Ground-work of their Nature to be very different; and that Mind, which is the seat of *Wisdom*, *Liberty* and *Virtue*, is not Matter; but somewhat distinct from it, and far above it; tho' it manages and over-rules the workings of Matter at pleasure, and acts with some sort of *Despotick* Power over the Body, as God doth over those prodigious Globes and Masses of Matter, which he made and moveth with an *arbitrary* Regularity. The Infinite Author of the Visible and Invisible Scene of Things spake it instantly into Being, and, by Virtue of his Omnipotence, the shapeless Chaos of Matter became that beautiful Constellation of Orbs, which we now behold. He said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; Let there be *Heaven*, *Earth*, *Sea*, and *Stars*, and they were instantly in View. Thus our Souls
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will the Eye to see, the Tongue to speak, and the Hands to work, and it is immediately so with us. Now this Empire of Thought, which is so quick in the actuation and effects of its secret Power and Principle, is a Shadow of the Spirituality and Power of God; and 'tis by this Impress of Authority upon it, that Creatures of meer Matter are placed in subjection to Man.

A *second* Character given of God in Scripture is this, *God is Light*; that is, a Being of Infinite Understanding and Glory, to whom all things are open, naked and known, with one intire and undistracted View. Thus in the Mind of Man are lodg'd innumerable Ideas and Sensations; by which he is capable of a thousand Pleasures, if he makes good use of his Understanding, and of unspeakable Torments, if he abuses it. This is the *Receptacle* of the Inspiration of the Almighty; here are lodg'd the Seeds of *Genius*: Industrious Thinking, and cultivation of this Divine Thirst for Knowledge, makes Men Masters of Arts and Sciences. Knowledge and Learning make every object of Sense a fine Scene of Theory to the Mind, and erect a New World in the Heart of the Old one, for the entertainment of the Soul. How many uses of the *Sea* and *Stars*, and *Products* of Forreign Countries had been

been lost, unless Astronomy, and other Inventions, had furnish'd Mankind with Skill to sail in the dreadful Ocean? Plants, Flowers and Minerals, might have refresh'd our Senses in health; but could hardly have restored it without the *Chymists* Noble and Inquisitive Sagacity. 'Tis Reason furnishes Man with *Arms* and *Arts*, to subdue the Fury of Wild Beasts, and to make them subservient to our comfortable Support: without this they would neither feed nor cloath us as they do now: We shew our Dominion over the subordinate Creatures, when Diligent Geniuses, by United Skill and Labour, turn Forests into Cities, Desarts into Gardens, and Insects, by the use of Glasses, into Elephants and Lions: without this Invention the astonishing Wonders of the little World, which consists of as many Classes of animated Structures as the larger, had escap'd our Admiration; nay some of them our bare Observance. And yet this Principle of Light in Man, which invented these Glasses, and other Instruments of Comfort to Soul and Body, shines with a brighter Ray, when it shews the Beauty of the First Cause, and that Immortal State, which his Goodness hath prepared for his faithful Friends and Subjects. How grand must that Capacity be own'd, that can thus contemplate both the
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Creator and his Works? This must be allowed to be a faint Image of the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God.

A *third* Character given of God in Scripture is this, *God is Love*. That is, he is *Goodness* it self; he is all over Good and doth Good: His creating ours, and other Worlds, shews him of a Communicative and Generous Nature; *Benevolous* in his *designs*; and *Beneficent* in his *works*: and by Virtue of this Principle he is infinitely *Holy*; which is the *Attribute* upon which *Scripture* doth so much insist, and require us to admire and imitate; so that he cannot do any thing Wicked or amiss, beneath himself, or against his own Honour and Happiness.

Now we may trace a Ray of this Divine Perfection of *Love* upon Man: Love is due to *God*, to our *Selves*, to our *Neighbours*. God hath planted a Principle of Love for himself in our Souls, for he hath given us a *competent* knowledge of himself; and, by the Beauty and Harmony of his Works, we justly conclude the Author of them to be infinitely beautifull and amiable in himself; and therefore he must be confess'd to be the most deserving object of Love to all that know him; especially since they that know him can't but at the same time
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know him to be the Author of all they have: which Knowledge ought to be a firm Foundation of sentiments of Gratitude towards him. Besides, God hath given the byass of our Wills and Affections such a strong stress, that wherever they fix they meet with enraging disappointment, if they fix upon an object unworthy of themselves, as they always do whenever they settle it upon *Worldly* Honours, Riches and Pleasures, or any Enjoyment under God himself. This Principle of being uneasy at Heart, when convicted of an Idolatrous desertion of God, is a strong argument for our loving God, and for our being intirely resign'd to the Will of his Providence, and to the Will of his Commands; since this is the only full and satisfactory proof of our Love for God. Neither doth it need to be *mathematically* prov'd: Conscience is the best and a powerful Demonstration of it; and to that I may venture to make my appeal in all of you. *2dly*, God hath given us a Principle of Just Love for our selves; by giving us convictions of our Immortality, and the *preferribleness* of our Souls to our Bodies, and by punishing us with uneasiness and remorse; whenever we prefer the sordid pleasures of Sense, before the purer pleasures of Reason and Faith. *Lastly*, he hath given us a Principle

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ple of Love for our Neighbour, by giving us Bowels of Compassion, which plead for a Neighbour in Misery; and by planting a Principle of *Sociableness* in our Minds, to unite us into great and small *Communities*. To this we owe Government, and that Variety of Professions, by which as Fellow-creatures we become the more helpful to one another.

This capacity of acting for God's Glory, for our own lasting Good, and the Comfort and Benefit of our Neighbour, in a Wise and Godlike use of our several Talents, is the noblest part of God's Image in Man; and that wherein he would have us most careful to improve our selves. This is the Love which is originally of God, and he that dwelleth in it and is guided in his Conduct by it; dwells in God, is called the Friend of God, and a Man after his own Heart; holds the most satisfactory Communion with him: He can delight himself in the Almighty, and according to the compass of his created Nature, become Holy, as God is Holy here; and Perfect, as God is Perfect hereafter, when he will see his God as he is seen, and know him as he is known.

To apply what hath been said to our present State: If we consider the Original Frame of our Souls, the Principle of Divine
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Knowledge of Liberty for doing Good, and Integrity that was planted in the Hearts of our first Parents; we can't but take to our selves words, and say, behold God is great, mighty in Strength, and mighty in Wisdom, who hath made so excellent and compleat a Creature as Man was; and he despiseth not any. But alas, tho' God made Man upright, we have perverted our Nature by foolish Inventions of our own. How are the Mighty fallen! Who shall deliver our Souls from their load of Sin and Corruption? I answer *Jesus Christ*; his Grace is sufficient for the restitution and recovery of the defaced Image of God in our Minds. Wherefore acquaint your selves with him in time and be in peace, for so shall your former good come unto you. Seek his Spirit and obey his Directions: For this is the way to put on the New Man; which is renewed in Knowledge, according to the Image of him that made you, unto Righteousness, and true Holiness unto Good Works. Every Man hath some Print of God upon him: But the Regenerate Man is his most perfect Offspring: He that is righteous, as God is righteous, doth manifest himself to be a Genuine Child of God: He is seal'd and stamp'd by the Impress of his Divine Spirit.

This is the Man who is more excellent

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than his Neighbour; He will be glad in the Lord. God remembers him with the favour, which he bears towards his peculiar people, and visits him with his Salvation from Guilt and Hell; so that he sees the good of his Chosen, and glorieth with his Inheritance. Light is sown for the Righteous, and Joy for the Upright in Heart. Whom, saith he to God, have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth I desire in comparison of thee. As for me I will behold thy Face in Righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake up after thy Likeness. Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel and after that receive me into Glory.

O may God fill us all with his Divine Spirit, even the Spirit of the Lord (*for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*) that we, who now see the Glory of the Lord, as in a Glass and through a Veil, may be admitted into the Kingdom of Life and Bliss, and be changed and transformed into the same Image of the Divine Nature, with the Exalted and Triumphant Humanity of the Blessed *Jesus*, from Glory to Glory, *Amen*.

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D before the
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

August the 17. 1707.

II. PET. I. 4.

Partakers of the Divine Nature, —

To be *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, is so great an expression; and the Idea, for which it stands in common speech, so very Noble and Magnificent; that it should seem perfectly unapplicable to *Created Minds* of the Highest Order; but much more improper to be applied to the Minds of *Men*; which are intomb'd in Bodies of Flesh, stain'd with irregular Appetites; and, in their best Estate, too much plung'd in earthly Cares and mean Pursuits. And it must be confess'd that, if

there were a Necessity to give such a Sense to this Character, as to suppose that they who deserve it had not a distinct Essence from the Essence of God, according to the monstrous opinion of some extravagant *Thinkers, it would be a very shocking Scripture to the most devout and sober *Contemplatists*; and it would puzzle the Wit and Subtlety of all the *School-Men* to vindicate it from the imputation of *Blasphemy* and *Profaneness*. But since there are *two* very obvious Senses of this Character; one wherein *all Men* may be said to be Partakers of the Divine Nature, and another wherein *all are capable of deserving it*, tho' very few do so employ their Capacities as to deserve it; we need not be distress'd with any such difficulties. For first by Θεῖα Φύσις (which being without an Article prefix'd in the Original, I had rather render *a* Divine Nature, than *the* Divine Nature) may be understood that Godlike Principle, in the Ground-work of our Being and Essence, by which all Minds in general are a sort of rough Copies of the *Uncreated* Mind. And thus the Mind of

* Some Platonists look'd upon the Human Soul as a τμήμα, or ἀντίπαρμα, or ἡ ἀντίρροια of the Divine Nature, and talk much of the *Fons Animarum* the ζωαρχία and the παρὰ ἀενάαν φύσιν. Lactantius and Prudentius bred in that Philosophy were tainted with this Notion.

every Man is a partaker of a Divine Nature, and approacheth and resembleth the Infinite Mind in a finite Capacity. *Created Matter* proves the *Existence* and *Power* of God: But *created Minds* give distant and imperfect *Essays* of his *Nature*. For God himself being a Mind, every Mind, and consequently the Mind of Man, shews us a God, not only as Smoak discovers Fire, and as a Picture supposeth a Painter that drew it; for thus the visible World, and Works of God, prove his Wisdom and Goodness no less than his Being and Power: But it represents God to us as a *Spark* doth *Fire*, as a *Ray of Light* doth the *Sun*, and as a *Picture* its *Original*.

Whenever we compare the Works of Nature and the Works of Art, we can't but boldly conclude God to be the same thing *in great*, which the Mind of Man is *in little*. We find that our *finite* Thoughts can produce *Ships* and *Palaces*. What need then to hinder us from concluding, that an *Universe of Heavens, Earth, Air and Sea* are the Production of *Infinite* Thought? *Pullies, Glasses, Air-Pumps* and other *Mathematical Engines*, are the Creatures of *Men*, and yet they do wonders, in some proportion, in the Scene of Human Arts and Sciences. *Winds*, which are the

Creatures of *God*, do greater in the Scene of Nature. Nevertheless, why should we not allow, that what *invents* is of the same Nature with that which *creates*, and could create, were it possible it might be improv'd, to such an extent of Being and Power, as the first Cause comprehends within himself.

The first Cause is present in the World imperceptibly to our Senses, but perceptibly to our Reason, by the sight of his Works, and the demonstrable necessity of there being some Infinite and Invisible Agent in the World to support it. Thus that which knows, judgeth and resolves within our selves is imperceptible to our Senses; for *no one ever heard its Voice or saw its Shape*, yet it is clearly discern'd by its own reflections to have a Nature of its own, *distinct from the Body*, and *superiour to it*; for *it* acts amazingly upon the Body, and controuls its course, when it exerts it self, tho' with a bounded Sphere of activity. Whence comes such a resembling correspondence between the still and mystical, but efficacious inaction of God upon the World; and that of the Soul upon the Body? How comes Reason to perceive God, and it self, when the Eye can see neither, unless there were a *Cognition* of Nature between God and the Mind,

Mind, whereas Matter can pretend to no such affinity to it. Reason doth that imperfectly, and with difficulty, which Divine Providence doth to Perfection with the freest ease and indisturbance; for the Principle of their Nature is much the same, but the extent of *each* amazingly different; and one acts in dependence upon, and subordination to the other. Thus, *Exemplum Dei quisque est in imagine parvâ*, all Minds are Images of God, and in some sort Partakers of a Divine Nature, by an essential Principle of *Knowledge* and *Liberty*.

But this is not the Sense, in which the Apostle must be understood, in this place; for the *Context* supposeth *some* not to be partakers of it in *his* Sense, when he adviseth the Christians, to whom he was writing, to aspire after it: before they could attain to it, they must have got disentangled from the *Corruption that is through Lust*.

Wherefore by a *Divine Nature* we must not understand a bare resemblance and representation of God, by partaking of an Immaterial Substance, (for all created Minds do so partake of it in course) but a Divine Substance *improv'd*; a *Godlike* Temper and Disposition of Mind, inclining us to think, resolve and manage our Conduct, according to and about what we can observe God doth
most

most employ his infinite Knowledge and Power. *Religio est imitari quod colimus.* When our use of our Will and Knowledge takes its measures from the known Will and Conduct of God; then we do him the greatest Honour, pay the most acceptable Homage to him, and transcribe him most to the Life. Goodness perfects the Image of God in created Minds, and gives the brightest and most majestick resemblance of him.

In discoursing upon *the Divine Nature*, taken in this Sense of the *Phrase*; it will be convenient to take the exactest survey of it that we can, as it is originally seated in the *Supreme Mind*, and *Author* of things.

2dly, To examine how *created Minds* in general are capable of deriving it from the Supreme Mind.

3dly, To shew more particularly what methods are properest to be used, by *Minds united to Bodies* like ours, in order to a participation of it.

First, I say, it will be convenient to take the exactest survey of the Divine Nature that we can, as it is originally seated in the Supreme Mind, and Author of Things. God being *incomprehensible* (and sure if he were not, he were not God) may very reasonably be presumed to abound in many Perfections, whereof our scanty Minds can have

no Notion; such as neither the Works of Creation, nor his Administration of the Universe, nor Inspired Books themselves do discover to us: and even those, whereof we have the clearest Notion, are Unmeasurable in their extent to our bounded Thinking. There are vast Abysses of Glories in God's Nature hitherto undiscovered to us; and possibly many of them will be always undiscoverable to us. However, we know something certainly of him; and from what we know (as little as it is) we may draw infallible deductions, concerning the inseparableness of several Properties and Attributes from his Being. For he that is the vast and boundless Sea of Excellency and Perfection, must be possess'd of every temper and disposition of Mind, that are *Ornamental* and *Perfective* of thinking Substance. And as we may have a very clear prospect of the Ocean, tho' our Eyes be not so large as to take in its vast Circumference; and as we may truly discern several conspicuous properties of a Mountain, without being able to clasp it in our Arms: So we may have some very just apprehensions of the Divine Nature, and such as are sufficient for all the Necessities of created Minds of our Class, during our State of Tryal, tho' our limited Understandings cannot grasp the whole of it.

Accor-

Accordingly among other truths relating to God, we may depend upon what follows for one. Tho' God is above all Law from without himself, yet he is a Law to himself; For the Gift of wise *Legislation* is originally from him; he is not arbitrary in his Temper; one while approving, and another while disapproving of the same Conduct and Procedure in himself or others. His own Nature is an Everlasting Gospel, prescribing to his Infinite Mind all Tempers and Dispositions, which promote the Glory of the best of Beings, the Conservation of the Universe, and the flourishing State of Particular Members of it. *Graces* and *Virtues* are not *factitious* things of an arbitrary Institution, made by the Will and Command of the more powerful to the Weaker; but they are *Nature* and *Perfection*, necessarily and unchangeably in God what they are; *Constituent* Ingredients of *true Deity*; and the Seeds of them, like those of their Immortality, descend downwards into subordinate Minds from the Unoriginated Mind. God is a fix'd *Pattern*, as well as *Cause*, of a *Divine* Temper, wherever it is found. All our Natural Notices of Moral Law derive their Eternal *obligativeness* from the Unvariable dictates and conduct of that Uncreated Mind, whereof they are but imperfect Copies.

Copies. The original Rules of the Oeconomy of his Providence, among his Creatures, are not the sole results of meer absolute Will, because no Power can controul it; but the Sacred and Immutable byas of an *Infallible Understanding*, and *inflexible Charity*.

But because it will be more instructive to be particular; I shall make it my business to lay down several particular Maxims, by which the Conduct of God may be reasonably judged to proceed, and to govern it self. Now all those Maxims, which may be drawn from some *very obvious* and *universally allow'd* conception of God, stand fairest to be allow'd by the *Impartial* to be some of them. Wherefore whatever Maxims of Conduct may be fairly drawn, from the Consideration of God's being *the First Cause*, may and will, I hope, be readily admitted as easy, warrantable and undeniable. For tho' *a First Cause* is not one of the first expressions by which God is denoted, yet I dare appeal to the greatest part of my *Audience*, whether it be not the earliest and most obvious notion of God, which enters the Minds of Men; I believe, I say, I may safely challenge your assent to this observation, if you please to recollect your first apprehension of a God. For, upon a mature use of
Reason,

Reason, we can't but find the belief of a First Cause unavoidably necessary, for the satisfactory solution of our enquiries into the reason of the successive existence of Innumerable things, which we know but yesterday began to be; and of whom we discern that none of them have an ability to give life and being; or to preserve, for a considerable time, that being which either they themselves or others have.

Now among other properties, which I can't stand to insist upon, it must be allow'd that a *First Cause* must be

1st. *Eternal.*

2dly, *Universal.*

3dly, *Supreme.*

4thly, *Infinite.*

5thly, *Spiritual.*

6thly, *Benevolent, Free and Fruitfull.*

1st, A *First Cause* must be *Eternal.*

Every *Effect* refers us to some *Cause*; and that, if it be *finite* in its Power, refers us to *another* for its beginning; and that to a *third*, and so on throughout a long Scale of limited Causes, till we ascend to the *topmost* Round of them; and end in some Principle, which fram'd the links of the whole Chain, and tied them in their allotted order together; a principal Spring which set all the other Movements a going; of which there could

could be no Author, and which must have the Perfection of *Self-existent*; and so of course must have ever been whatever it is, and remain always such. The first Cause could have no Author but it self; since none was before it, for otherwise it would not be the First; nor it self indeed strictly speaking; since if there had been a time when it was not extant, there would then have been a time when there was nothing in the World; and upon this supposition, whereas all other things are allowed to have a Regular and Fore-ordained beginning, the Principal of all would be supposed to have owed its beginning to Chance; which is so absur'd that it is better to allow some one Being to be Eternal, tho' the Idea of Self-existence doth swallow up our thoughts too fast for us to have a clear Comprehension of it.

Wherefore since God as First Cause can't but have been without Beginning, and can't but be without End (for what should put an end to that which gave life to every thing?) we may rest satisfied, that the dispositions of his Mind, whatever they shall appear to be, ever were, and ever will remain unalterably the same: which Tempers, as they are the Source of all Beauty and Perfection, and naturally tend to give Being, and to improve it to a State of well Being;

so *Conformity* to them, in Created Minds, will have the same effect in proportion to its *Exactness* and *Continuance*: On the contrary, for the same Reason *difformity* thereunto tends to Ruine, and Confusion in those who indulge themselves in it, in proportion to the *degree* and *duration* of the said difformity: Eternal Conformity to the Dispositions of God will produce Eternal Happiness: Eternal Difformity to them will have Eternal Misery for its product. God for this reason must necessarily be a Lover of *Purity* and *Holiness*, that is, of all those tempers of Mind, whereof he shall be found to be an Eternal Exemplar. He can't renounce his own Nature. But Inferiour Minds must renounce theirs, whereinsoever it is opposite to the Divine: Otherwise God, who is an *Heaven* to those who copy after his own Temper, will be an *Hell* to them. Holiness therefore and the Love of it is an Inseparable Property of the Divine Nature. This therefore should be the first Divine temper in Created Minds.

2^{dly}, A First Cause must be *Universal*. All Natures in the exertion of their different degrees of efficacy follow it, and cooperate with it; they depend in their Motions upon it, and derive their various shares of Power from it. Since therefore the Universe, or
whole

whole Combination of inferior Causes and Agents, is the Lord's, and hath a greater Resemblance and Impress of the First Cause upon it, than *particular* Causes and Agents; a Preference of the Good of the Universe, to the private Interest of Individuals, is another Divine Temper, essential to the Nature of God, and shews *Publick Spiritedness* to be such a Temper in Finite Minds.

If therefore the placing particular Minds in a State of Tryal first, and then removing them into another State, and afterwards rearing them up gradually to the State of their highest Perfection, be more for the Splendor of the Universe, than the fixing Human Souls immediately in their final State of Bliss, without such a previous State of Tryal in Bodies, and a State of Separation from Bodies. If the Eternal Torments of the Damned, which they bring upon themselves, tends to a greater illustration of the Beauty of God's Holiness, and of the Glory of that Conformity thereunto, which is found in innumerable Worlds of Happy Beings, than if the (comparatively speaking) few that are damn'd were not so tormented, or tormented so but for a time; if the Dissolution of particular Beings makes way for the introduction of new ones; and the filling up the whole Complement of Creatures,

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which God hath fore-allotted to every kind of Nature, and hastneth the time of the Restitution of all things, when those Structures of Matter, which for a time have been dissolved, shall be rebuilt, and adorn'd with greater Perfections, to continue for ever: If these or any other *Phænomena* of Providence, such as God's prospering the Wicked, and chastning the Righteous, do promote the greater Order and Variety in the whole Scheme of God's works, and make it the more Uniform in the end; God in so doing acts, as becomes an Universal Cause, and 'tis a necessary Virtue in Man to acquiesce in all his Disposals as Righteous, tho' *some* of them at present look strange and unaccountable, and bear hard upon *particular* Minds.

3dly, A First Cause must be a *Supreme* one. For the first being Universal is Comprehensive of all the rest; and none oppose it effectually; since he rules and guides their Regularities, and overrules their Motion, when they are irregular and eccentric: So that some way or other they must prove subordinate to, and cooperate with him; all their Operations in subserviency to his Will, at the long run promoting the noble and extensive designs of the Deity. From this Property of the First Cause we may be convinc'd,

vinc'd, that God prefers his own Honour, Will and Law before all other; and hath the highest Honour, Love and Esteem for himself, because they are due to his own, as being indisputably the most excellent Being. This Temper in created Beings is the greatest Vice with which they can be defiled: But it is the Noblest Grace in the whole Divine Nature of God, as being the preservative of all the Excellencies of it: for 'tis by this Grace that he is secured from deflecting from the lucid Dictates of his Glorious Mind, and from acting in any respect beneath or inconsistently with the Dignity of his tremendous Nature; which, if God could be supposed capable of doing, the whole Universe must go to wrack with its Author (since the Happiness of the whole Choir of blessed Beings is contained in the Happiness and indefectible Perfection of God) and instead of *one* Hell that is now in being; and is as useful in an Universe, as Prisons are for the safety of Cities and Common-wealths, there would be as many Hells as there are Worlds throughout all the Systems, which God hath made. Since therefore God's just predominant Love of himself, and Eye to his Glory, is a Divine Temper of so great a sway; it is necessary for us to be subject to his Will, to acquiesce in the Disposals of his Providence;

dence, and to make his Glory the main Scope of all our Actions; to be delighted in contemplating the Charms of his Perfections, shining thro' his *Word* and *Works*, and to be enamoured with him; to have a Zeal for his Honour, and to perform all our Duties from a *predominant Love* of him, and an Hope of a more intimate converse with him, and enjoyment of him: we ought to cast off all Idolatrous trust and confidence *in* and fondness *for* them, and to be wholly rapt up in God; for he is the Source of all Joy, Light, *Purity* and all valuable Accomplishments: He should reign triumphant in our Affections, and vain Idols should no longer have Dominion over us. *The Lord reigneth* should be an indelible *Motto*, engraven upon our Hearts; and we should even slight and hate our selves, could we conceive these our *dear dear* selves separated from him.

4^{ly}, A First Cause must be Infinite: Every Perfection in him must be so; and unless it be so, it cannot extend to all Persons, Places and Duration, as an Universal Cause needs must in its *Presence* and *Efficacy*. By Virtue of this Perfection he doth conceive the most noble Aims, and doth accomplish them. All God's designs are very extensive; such as the *Creation* of New Worlds and Natures;

or

or the *Restitution* of those that are lost and decayed, or the *Consummation* of such as are growing and imperfect. Eternal Scenes are the Theatre; and Eternal Views the Scope of his Actings and Governance. It is the property of the Eternal Divine Nature to have the final and permanent State of things in his prospect: and in imitation of him, the State of our Eternity should be principally regarded throughout the tenour of our Conduct. Here we should travel with great solicitude: But in all undertakings, wherein none but our temporal interests are embark'd, we should transact the affair with less concern of Mind. A brave Contempt of the World appears, by our not being dispirited by the loss of transitory Goods, nor exalted by the hope or possession of them. Remember the End of things, and the Fate and Fortune of Eternity; for these cannot be remedied, nor removed in case of miscarriage, after we have once been brought under their Power.

5thly, The First Cause must be *Spiritual*; a Being endued with Knowledge and Power, and Liberty and freedom of acting any how, in consistency with the Dignity and Purity of his Nature: for since second Causes are many of them thus endowed; much more must their Author be endowed with those

advantageous properties; *He that teacheth Man Knowledge shall not be know?* Properly speaking, there is no such Cause as a meer material Cause in the World, for a Cause implies *Activity* and *Motion* in the Essential, Constituent parts and properties of it: But meer matter, not impressed and agitated by some Mind or other, is purely *passive*; and therefore it is to degrade the Deity to suppose any thing of Matter in his Being, who acts with the greatest Freedom and Force, Mind that is but *finite* can govern certain portions of Matter; and in many cases with a despotick command: why then may not Infinite Mind (whose Spirituality, and ways of working are as much above ours as his Thoughts are beyond the Thoughts of Men and Angels) be allowed the Power of producing Matter, without having any thing of it in the Eternal principle of his own excellent Nature.

The *Spirituality* of the First Cause, rightly considered, convinceth us, that God is more desirous of the welfare of our *Souls*, than of the welfare of our *Bodies*: For the Soul is the Seat of the Divine Nature, and capable of a fainter Likeness to its Maker; but the Body is not so. 'Tis therefore the property of a Divine Mind to prefer the flourishing Condition of the *thinking* and
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influencing part, before that of the *mortal, passive* and *subordinate* part of our Nature; and the Pleasures of *Reason* and *Conscience*, which are independent on the Body, before those *animal* Pleasures whereof the Body is an Occasion and Instrument; and to dread the *simple Pains* of the Mind, *viz.* those of *Guilt*, more than *Poverty*, *Sickness* and other Evils, which arise from the wants and frailties of the Body.

Lastly, The First Cause must be *Benevolent*, *Free* and *Fruitful*: It being full of Perfection proved so fruitful in working; It wanted nothing for its own Happiness, and therefore could have no other design in creating, than the Happiness of others, and new Beings in dependence upon himself, when it gave them their Origin of Life and Sensation. Doth a Man make any thing to spoil it when he hath done it? No, for service, and to shew his Skill in the Neatness of what he makes and invents. God loves his Creatures better than we can our Handy-Work. *Envy* and *Malevolence* are not, *could not be*, creating Principles. God was above all such tempers; and he that made Beings must be delighted in preserving, and improving what he hath made to the utmost perfection their first Models will admit of. Destruction frustrates the design of Creation. Ungodly Men with their Works pull down the misery

which they feel upon their own Heads, by leaving God and opposing his Laws. God's Purity indeed is the Cause of torment to the Wicked; but they first presumptuously annoy that Purity. Destruction pursues more or less swiftly all that neglect to imitate the Divine Temper of their Maker, by the mechanical effects and tendency of their own defection from God. When created Minds aim at an Heaven of their own Building, and accommodated to the relish of inordinate Desires; what can that Building be but a *Babel*? they do but reap the fruit of their own devices, and must, in a reasonable tract of time, inevitably smart for their Apostacy, and turn the Sense of God's Presence into an Hell to themselves. But God is *placable* to Sinners; till they are *unchangeably* vicious; if they will return to God he will return to them, and be as generous in *forgiving* the *Rebellions* of the *Penitent*; as he is in giving and showering down *probationary* Favours upon the *Unjust*, in common with the *Just*. Nevertheless, without the Renovation of their impaired Souls, by a Conformity to their great Original, and a patient Imitation of God's Conduct; without devout Passions and Ardours, without a prevailing Love for God, and Zeal for his Honour; without spiritual Sincerity and noble

ble Intentions; without the Charity of *gi-ving* and of *forgiving*; without practising all sorts of Mercy, that lie in our power; without subjecting our Will to the Will of God, we can't attain Peace of Mind here, nor the Joys of Heaven hereafter. In these things that Divine Nature, whereof we ought to be partakers, doth consist. Without these the Divine Nature cannot possibly be exemplified in ours: for all these tempers and practises are the prevailing Rules of God's Government of the Creation. *Be ye therefore Imitators of God herein as dear Children.* And in order to encourage your endeavours hereafter I proceed to shew,

2dly, *How created Minds are capable of transcribing the Divine Temper of God in themselves.* It is very certain that, if God had so thought fit, he might have made created Minds on the one Hand perfectly insensible of himself, and acquiescing without any reluctance of Conscience in an inconstant mixture of *Spiritual* and *Carnal* pleasures, conveyed to them by second Causes; so that they should not find out any traces of himself, nor have perceiv'd and tasted God by devout Passions in those pleasing sensations and reflections, which are originally his Gifts (let whatsoever Things
or

or Operations seem to the thoughtless to be the intire occasion of them) but would have supposed all the pleasures of *Sense, Contemplation, Reason, Friendship and Society*, to be owing solely to those visible Objects which occur immediately to the Notice of sight; and withall God might have given them such *confined Ideas and Desires*, as would render them satisfied with these *meaner secular* enjoyments, and uncapable of uneasiness for want of better. And to this State some Men have now almost reduc'd themselves, by neglect of Meditation; so that in St. Paul's Phrase *they in a manner live without God in the World*, that is as insensible of him and his Perfections, as if there were no such Being; or at least, as if he could not be known by Man; nor any of his Perfections be copied out by him. Or God might on the other hand have *immediately* made Man *indefectibly*, as Holy as he could be, and such a perfect Copy of the Deity, as he would now have every created Mind make it self, by a good and prudent use of its Liberty. And thus Man, and all other created Minds, would have been Instruments in the Hand of God, forcibly strong, and tun'd and founded to his own Praises.

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Had God I say pitch'd upon either of those two extremes, who could have found fault with the proceedings of Infinite Wisdom? But since it is evident he hath not done so; and since what God doth in all cases is the most *preferrible* Method; the present State in which we find our selves must be own'd to be settled on the firmest Bottom of Wisdom and Equity. Created Minds now find themselves capable of *knowing* God, by the right use of their Understanding; and of *sensing* him by a right and heavenly use of their *Wills*: They find their Wills enlarg'd, and byass'd with an Infinite stretch of Desire; and so capable of being in quest after an Infinite Good, that is, a Good equal with and as great and large as God himself, and consequently capable of enjoying God; and yet at the same time they find these vast desires may be profusely flung away on meaner objects, which balk them when they do so, and enrage them with disappointment; and so, during their first State, they are planted in a *Field of Tryal*, and left in the Hand of their own Counsels.

Thus the Soul of Man in particular is determined to an *Infinite Good*, as the Iron is to the Load-stone, but it is not *so* determined in its choice of *God* for *that* Good: and hence, for want of Thought and Vigilance
many

many Souls lose their aim; and prostitute to a *carnal* Luxury, Avarice and Ambition all those Noble Powers and Passions, which should be employ'd in the search and pursuit of God, and of the Enjoyments of his Heavenly Kingdom. For God created the World of Spirits, in order to love and adore himself, to celebrate his Praises and admire his Works; to imitate his Divine Perfections, and to render Glory to their Almighty Creator, 'Twas a mighty privilege for created Minds to be thus made after God's own Image in *Righteousness* and *Holiness*, in *Dominion* and *Power*, and *Freedom of action*; in an actual State of some degree of Happiness, and a bare possibility of losing it, for the sake of giving him the praise of acquiring by that possibility greater degrees of Happiness in another new State. For had it not been possible for Man, upon the account of his Liberty, to have forfeited by neglect, it had not been possible for him to acquire it by his diligence: and yet this is one recommending Ingredient of the Final Glory of the Saints, and doth very much endear it to them, when they reflect that they might have fail'd of it as well as others, and did somewhat, tho' very little at the best, towards securing the Bounty of God's *Final* and *Remunerative* Grace to themselves.

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You see then what created Minds have to do in this great affair; they must make an exprefs choice of their Creator for their End; in him, and the Enjoyment of him, their end and hope must terminate; they must not set up for Happiness without dependence upon him; nor bewilder their desires in the Mists and Desarts of created Objects: Their Scheme must be taken from God: His Divine Tempers must lie continually before their thoughts, and they must write after them in their Conduct as fair as they can, till they make the habitual Complexion of their Minds Divine like God's; and so fitted themselves, by their patient improvement of their Persons in Holiness, for those blessed Circumstances which need not be mended, and cannot be lost through all Eternity. This is necessary for the Mind of Man, in common with all other created Minds.

But we must in the *third* and *last* place speak a word or two of Advice, peculiarly fitted for *Minds united to Bodies*, in their endeavours after a Participation of the Divine Nature. Now it becometh us not only to eye God, *as God* for our Pattern; but as he was *Incarnate* in the person of *Jesus Christ*; because in that capacity he is not only a Pattern of Holiness, but an Example of such Holiness as it is peculiarly proper for

for us to be Examples of; an Holiness shining through the Infirmities of a corruptible Nature, and overcoming those special Temptations to which we are exposed: In *Christ* you see the Doctrine of the Cross; a Pattern of *Humility, Meekness, Patience* and *Self-denial*: He was an Example of all those Duties, which are necessary to recover revolted and degenerate Natures, as well as of those Graces, by which we must be made like unto God, tho' we had never revolted. Learn therefore of him. He took the Nature of Man upon him, that we might be made capable of partaking of the Nature of God. Γενώμεθα ὡς Χειρὸς, ἐπεὶ καὶ Χειρὸς ὡς ἡμεῖς. Γενώμεθα Θεοὶ δι' αὐτὸν ἐπειδὴ καὶ κενὸν δι' ἡμᾶς ἄνθρωπος. Greg. Naz. Orat. 41. *Let us become like Christ, because Christ became like one of us: Let us become God's for his sake, because he became Man for our sake.* By the Power of Christ's Intercession, Spirit and Assistance, Man may become, I will not say, as *Trismegistus* did, Θνητὸς Θεὸς a *Mortal God*; but a kind of Immortal Divine Being: To this purpose let us converse much with God, by reading the Holy Scripture. These Books were called by St. *Cyprian Libri Deifici*, Writings tending to transform our Souls into a Divine temper. *Animus hoc habet argumentum*
Divi-

Divinitatis suæ, quod illum Divina delectant. A Delight in Divine Books and Subjects is the greatest proof of the Divinity of our Souls in their Extraction. In those Books we shall see what *Jesus* vouchsafed to be, to do and to suffer upon our account. All Men have a *natural*, but good Men have an *improved* Participation of the Divine Nature. For they resemble it in Judgment and Disposition of Mind, in Action and Behaviour.

And since Spiritual Goods must be spiritually obtained, as well as discerned; be earnest, I beseech you, in Prayer for the Grace of God's transforming Spirit. Know the Dignity of your Nature, remember you have something more than Body. Consider its noble Capacity. Mortify the Body, and be very sparing in the use of sensual Pleasures. The Natural Powers of your Minds qualify them for admirable Enterprizes, and angelical Emulations; but the great and precious Promises of the Gospel set the most spacious prospect before you, and must very much enspirit you, if rightly considered, to purify your selves, even as God is Pure. Observe these Directions; and then you will add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and

*to Patience Godliness, and to Godliness
Brotherly Kindness, and to Brotherly Kind-
ness Charity: For if these things be in
you and abound, ye shall neither be bar-
ren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of
our Lord Jesus Christ: But an entrance
shall be ministred unto you abundantly into
the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and
Saviour Jesus Christ.*

S E R M O N

upon Candour and Serenity of Mind,

PREACH'D before the

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

ECCL. VII. #21.

*Also take no heed unto all
Words that are spoken.*

CONVERSATION with others, if it be *useful*, or *discreetly* chearful, according as different occasions direct, is one of the main Ingredients of a Man's Happiness in his Earthly Condition. But it can never have this desirable effect, unless we observe those good Rules, which the Word of God, and the Maxims of Wise Men have prescribed for the Government of our *Speech* and *Hearing*: For the *good* or *ill* consequences of our associating with one another hath a necessary dependence on our *commendable* or *blameable* Conduct

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of our *Hearing* and *Discourse*. Conversation becomes but troublesome, unless we have learnt to speak prudently, or at least to be prudently silent; and to hear others when they speak with *Kindness*, *Courtesy* and *Candour*. Wherefore, if the Words I have chose for my present Text will suggest such Matter to our Thoughts, as may help to make our conversing with others more safe, friendly and satisfactory; and to secure the Quiet of our own Minds in a confus'd and ill-temper'd World, a Discourse upon it must be acknowledg'd to be of a *practical* and *usefull* Tendency.

Now this short *Memento* of *Solomon*, *Also take no heed* (or, *give not thy heart*, as the *Margin* renders it) *unto all Words that are spoken*, may, if well observ'd have such an influence upon us; whether we consider it, as advising us, *First*, not to be solicitous about what other Persons may think fit to say of our selves: or *2dly*, as they may be taken to caution us against too forward a regard to what we hear those with whom we converse speak, in a detracting manner, concerning others. And *First*, let us consider the reasonableness of the Advice, as it is a *Caveat* against an Immoderate Anxiety, upon the account of what others may say of our selves: which indeed is the Advice

vice which the *Text* principally intends, as we may see by the Words that follow, *lest thou hear thy servant curse thee, for oftentimes also thy own Heart knows that thou thy self likewise hast cursed others:* as if he had said; *Be not too Inquisitive to know what every body saith, or thinks of your self, for if you are, you may possibly hear one who depends on you; and who ought to be civillest to you, speak slightingly and unkindly of you: and should you overhear him speaking thus of you; you, it may be, have no reason, if you lay your Hand upon your own Breast, to scan his Words too rigidly; for perchance in a Passion you have given him some Temptation to speak thus of you; or you your self perhaps, in a fit of Anger, or Pain, or when in a cloudy Humour, or under some Discontent, may have bolted out some indiscreet Words against those very Persons, whom you really love and esteem in the main.* Accordingly it is in this Sense I now proceed to consider the Words.

Tho' the main Spring of all our Actions should be the Approbation of God, and our own Consciences; yet we owe so much regard and deference to those who partake of the same Nature with our selves, as not intirely to slight their Judgment; and to use

any reasonable means of gaining, and continuing their Esteem of us, or to remove any Prejudice or Disesteem they may have conceiv'd against us. And hence it is that a *good Name* is represented as a considerable thing in *Scripture*; and we are *there* exhorted to practise not only whatsoever things are *True, Honest, Pure* and *Just*; but also whatsoever things are of *Good Report*: And to slight the Esteem or Disesteem of the *Better* and *Wiser* part of Mankind, hath been always reckoned the sign of *Pride, Moroseness*, or some ill habit both in our *Minds*, and in our *Manners*. 'Tis *Cynical* and not *Christian* for any one absolutely to despise Reputation even in this World: But that which the *Text* requires of us is, that we should always principally take care, in the intire Thread and Chain of our Conduct, to live and behave our selves by an exact Principle of Conscience towards God, in the *first* place; and in the *next*, to behave our selves with due Decorum in the Eye of the World, so as to deserve the Good Word of Vertuous People; and not to give any one of the meanest or worst Character any just Occasion of branding us with an Ill one; or to give a disobliging or lessening Character of us. And when our Conscience bears us witness that our Behaviour hath
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been such, according to the best Judgment we can pass upon our Conduct, with due regard to God's *Omniscience* and *Omnipresence*, we are to remain satisfied, and not to be solicitous as to what the generality of the World think of us, or uneasy, tho' some sort of People (who deserve not a good Word themselves, and take delight in Slander and Detraction) should speak slightly and unkindly of us. When we have done our part, we may rest contented, at least, we need not be disconsolate, whether *ill Report* or *good Report* be our Portion: for we may comfort our selves with the Sense of God's all-seeing Eye, and the Testimony of our Conscience, which triumphs in the prospect of the acquitting Sentence of the Judge of the World at the last Day, and the Praise, and Commendation, and Esteem of *Jesus*, *Angels*, and *Saints Innumerable*, and *Immaculate* in the Eternal and Heavenly World. And this seems to me to be the meaning of that Advice, which the Wise Man gives to *deserving* Persons for the Government of our resenting the *undeserved* ill Treatment of other Mens Tongues: *My Son glorify thy Soul in Meekness, and give it Honour according to the Dignity thereof*: We are to remember that we are not to fall or stand by the Sentence of Man; nor to be saved

or condemned by a Poll at the Great Day of Judgment; but by the decision of God and Jesus, whose Eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the Sun. The Testimonials of Conscience, and the Gospel will be the only recommendation of every Man in that *final* and *supreme* Court of *Honour* and *Justice*; and therefore if we get these, our *unjustly* missing of, or losing the good Word of Men, can be no just ground of Uneasiness or Anxiety; for then those, and those only, will appear to be honorable, *whose Praise is not of Men but of God*.

That I may give the greater force to this *Dissuasive* from giving way to Uneasiness, or extravagant Resentments, that may be occasioned in us by the unjust ill treatment of other Mens Tongues; I shall offer some Considerations which may be serviceable to this purpose. And these shall be taken, *first*, from the different *Matter* which may be the Subject of this their injurious Treatment of our Names and Actions: or *2dly*, from *the different Character* of the Persons who injure us this way; or *3dly*, from the different *Relation of Degrees* in the World, in which those Persons stand, with respect to our selves; or *4thly*, from the different *Manner* and Circumstances of their Detraction.

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First, we may draw some Considerations, which may help to restrain our Uneasiness, or extravagant Resentments of the injurious Treatment of other Mens Tongues, from the diversity of Matter which may be the Subject of their abusive Usage. As *first*, if they reproach Good Men with their *Virtue* (for we find there are those who, in the Phrase of a Prophet, *sin as it were with a Cart-Rope; who call Good Evil, and Evil Good; who put Darkness for Light, and Bitter for Sweet; and who, in the Style of an Apostle, commit all Uncleanneſs with greedineſs; and not only do abominable deeds themselves, but being paſt feeling; having the Underſtanding darkned to ſuch a degree, that even their Mind and Conſcience is defiled, and being alienated from the Life of God, becauſe of the Blindneſs of their Heart, do take pleaſure in thoſe that do them*) we are ſo far from having any reaſon to be diſturb'd, on our own account, that we ſhould count it matter of Joy, and Glory to do well and ſuffer this, or any other way for it; for great, *exceeding great*, will be the reward of thoſe who ſuffer truly and purely *for Righteouſneſs ſake*: If the Matter of their Detraction be a *Crime*, a *Vice*, or an ill Action; their Charge and Accuſation is either *true* or *false*:

If it be *false*; our own Conscience will abundantly vindicate and comfort us under it; and the reproaches of their Consciences too will *first* or *last*, avenge our Quarrel upon them: Indeed the spreading of such false Reports of Good Men is too common a practise in this Age, wherein *Libels* and *Invectives* are published and dispers'd with so much Diligence, and without Controll; and there is nothing so acceptable now a days, to abundance of People from the *Press*, as such *rancorous Pamphlets* are: These are the Men whose Hearts study Destruction, and their Lips delight in Mischief: They write with the *Scorpion's* Sting, and oyl their Tongue with the Venom of Asps. But tho' there are such Monsters of Malice, who make it their business to *forg*e and *propagate* Scandal, why should the Innocent Man vex himself with that Uneasiness, with which none but the Guilty ought to be stung? No ones malice ought to disturb the Serenity of that Mind, which for asking can have the Consolations of the Holy Ghost: 'Tis of use to observe Holy *David's* behaviour in this Case: *They laid to my Charge things which I knew not*: Hereupon he takes Sanctuary in recourse to God, as the Advocate of his Cause, and Vindicator of his Wrong, He made his Appeal to Hea-

Heaven; for faith he; *But I gave my self unto Prayer, plead thou my cause O Lord.* The noblest Revenge, under an ignominious Imputation, is to scorn and defie Calumny to disturb the *placid* State of our Minds; and to shew our Meekness by refraining from all unmanly Complaints. Instead of rendring Railing for Railing, let us pray for those *Shimeis* that slander and revile us; that God may be pleas'd to give them an Heart to confess their Crime; but alas who knows when they have made Restitution in this branch of Injustice? The Wounds of the Tongue are incurable; 'tis hard to guess how deep they descend. Slander circulates very fast, 'tis greedily suck'd in by Ears open to receive it; and they who believe a black Report, are deaf to the Slanderer's Recantation, being often unwilling that the injured Person should be set right in their Opinion: However, if the Slanderer remains as virulent as he was, when he first rais'd an ill Report of us, we have good Advice ministred to us, *Psalms* the 37. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass; he shall bring forth thy Righteousness as the Light, and thy Judgment as the Noonday.* Providence will find a time, tho' not one

one of our own appointing, to vindicate the Reputation of such Men, *of whom the World is not worthy*: Tho' they may suffer a while by the Oppression of a very bold and opprobrious Calumny; yet, at the long run, and when Patience has had its perfect work, *Wisdom will be justified of all her Children*.

After these particulars have been duly weighed, I think, it must be granted, that there is no reason why the Quiet of the Soul of an Holy Christian should be given up to the Mercy of every malicious Miscreant, that may make an attempt to shock and disturb it. 'Tis against the Law of Nature, and inconsistent with that sort of *Honour*, and *Courage*, and *Cheerfulness*, which is the Birthright of Virtue, that it should be so. If the Wicked whet their Tongues like a Sword; yet the Righteous will be as bold as a Lion; as quiet, as meek, and as free from Outrage and vexatious Resentments, as a Lamb: For *his Heart standeth fast in the Lord, he shall not be afraid of any evil Tidings*.

But further, if the Matter of the Accusation *be true*, as it is possible it may be, for he that is now a good Man may have done an ill Thing in the former part of his Life, if any such wicked Action is mentioned in Com-
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pany to his Dishonour, a good Man must bear it quietly, as part of his *corrective* Punishment for his Sin here, tho' he will not be punish'd with God's heavy Displeasure for it hereafter. Nevertheless, the exposing of the faults of Good Men, which they committed in their *Unregenerate* State, is not a warrantable practise, because it doth not become us to revive the Infamy of *Penitents*: for when Men have acknowledg'd a fault, repented of it, forsaken it, and made Restitution, where it was due, according to the Nature and Extent of their Crime, to the utmost of their power, we have reason to believe that the Goodness of God hath buried it in the Grave of a gracious Oblivion. If a Good Man hath done a single Action that is inconsistent with his Character, we should do well to remember, that the same Scripture which saith, *Judge not, and thou shalt not be Judged*; saith also, *Condemn not, and thou shalt not be Condemned*. Why should not we forget and forgive, what we have reason to hope God hath forgiven. And since there is not a just Man upon Earth, who doth good and sinneth not, we ought to be better pleased with every Man's present Vertues, and Usefulness in the World, than his past Follies, if he hath had them. *David* fell into two great

great Sins; and yet he is not call'd *David the Adulterer*, nor *David the Murderer*; but *a Man after God's own Heart*. Lot, tho' once guilty of *Incest* and *Drunkennes*, has the *Character of Righteous Lot*: for God seeth not as Man seeth; He judgeth not of Men by rare and single instances of Conduct, but by the known Tenour and prevailing Stream of their Temper and Behaviour: Men think more upon their *Faults*, than their *Repentance*; but *God* thinks more upon their *Repentance*, than their *Sins*: For He knows whereof we are made; He remembers that we are but Dust. There are some Intervals of Life, in which the most *Spiritual Heroes* sleep like *Homer* in his *Poem*; now if at such an *infrequent* juncture *Satan* takes an Advantage, and plys them with an Importunate Temptation to some *Constitutional* Passion, his Assaults may prove very successfull: Nevertheless, those Scandals of such Men ought not, after a visible and exemplary Restitution, to be always slung in their Teeth. *Reproach not a Man that turneth from Sin, but remember that we are all worthy of Punishment: But an unseasonable Tale* (saith the Son of *Sirach*) *will always be in the Mouth of the Unwise*. However, when it is so, the practice of Meekness and Patience is the peculiar Duty

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of a Virtuous Person under such Circumstances: And, as the same Writer saith, *How good is it when thou art reprov'd* (give me leave to add, *and when thou art reproach'd too*) *to shew Repentance?* We can never be too much humbled with the Sense of our former Miscarriages: And 'tis better that they should be thus imputed to us now, by the Providence of God, than that we should for ever be reproach'd for them in the other World. And thus when we do the Duty that lies upon us, in the Case of suffering just Reproaches, but unseasonably cast upon us, we do acquiesce in the certainty of our Repentance being sincere, because we do then easily bear with, and forgive those who revile us.

But 3^{dly}, perhaps the Matter of Men's Detraction may be the *lesser Failings* of good Men, which we commonly call *Sins of Infirmary*. There are very few Men, tho' *Wise* and *Virtuous*, that are wholly exempt from some sort of Errours and Singularity, which we may call the *Little-nesses* of Great Men; and yet perhaps, they guard against them as well as they can. Now the Bulk of Mankind, upon the account of their depraved Temper and vicious Moral, look with *Eagles Eyes* upon these Slips of such Virtuous Persons; and represent them as worse

worse in them, than their own Crimes in themselves. They are more Quickfighted to discern these *Motes* of theirs, than *Beams* in the Eyes of their own Companions. They take so much Pleasure in spying Spots in the Sun, that they will rather bear great charge and trouble, than want *Telescopes* to see them. Good Men can't comply with them in their dissolute and licentious way of Living; and therefore they censure, without Mercy, the innocent, decent, and reasonable Liberties of the Sober and Religious; and gladly fasten upon any thing in them to make them the Subject of their virulent Raillery. Rather than want matter of *Invective*, they will use all the Arts of *Misrepresentation*, to make a Man of *Character*, *Merit* and *Virtue* appear odious, little, or ridiculous; because they have observ'd, as *Solomon* did before them, that *as dead Flies cause precious Ointment to send forth a stinking Savour, so doth a little Folly expose him who is in Reputation for Wisdom and Honour*. Thus do they, who are born only after the Flesh, always persecute them who are born after the Spirit. There is nothing so inconsiderable, which Spite, and Prejudice, and a Party Spirit will not lay hold of, to give a mean Idea of a Person, whom they have a Mind to lessen; tho'

tho' at the same time he be one of known Worth, and an establish'd Character; and fitter to be an Example and Object of a commendable Emulation, than to be the subject matter of our Scorn and Laughter.

Now the Case being thus, what is there in all this that a Wise Man need to be surpris'd at, if his Actions are too severely scann'd, and he be attack'd by Lampoons and abusive Language, in such a wicked and licentious Age as we are now cast into? Only because he is not an *Angel*, and is a *Man* of the same Passions with others, as well as *Elijah*, *St. Paul*, and other Holy Men before him; but is eminently distinguish'd from others by his Government of his Passions; and such advances in Goodness and Piety, as the present Frailty and Condition of his Nature will admit of. If no Persons, but those who have no Frailties themselves, were proper and qualified for endeavoring to reform the monstrous Liberties of the loose and dissolute, how would the Government of the *Church* or *State* subsist: or whence should we have *Magistrates* or *Ministers* to supply the Necessities, and fill the Stations of *both*, or *either* of them? If *These* or their *Subordinates* be *conscientious*, *peaceable*, *orderly* and *regular* in the discharge of their Trust, none
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of them need be dejected or discontented, whilst they are playing the laborious Oar of their several Stations with Diligence and Fidelity, tho' they meet with malicious and ungratefull Usage, only for striving to do a little more Good than the *cursor* execution of their Office in the World may make necessary. The Entertainments of a Good Conscience are sufficient to support Men under all Discouragements, if that declares them to be faithfull: for true Generosity is its own Reward, and brings a Paradise of course with it into the Heart wheresoever it taketh it's abode. One thing however, let Reproaches and partial Cenforiousness from Immoral Livers teach all true Lovers of Virtue, I mean to be more circumspect in the Management of themselves in Conversation, that they may have less Matter still for their Envy and Malice to prey upon: The best of Men are not above this Caution. With this sort of divine Revenge a Christian may commendably turn the weapons of his Enemies against themselves, and make the *Scorpion* heal the Wounds of his own Poison. By the observance of this Rule, with that which I have already given, we shall observe the comprehensive Rule of the Apostle *Rom. 12.* the last verse. *Be not overcome*

come with Evil, but overcome Evil with Good.

But 2^{dly}, we may draw some Considerations, of use to our present purpose, from the different Characters of those who injure us this way; for either they are *Men of loose Lives and Principles*, or *Men of a sober and valuable Character*: if they are *Wicked and Profane*, their Tongue, as we say, is no Slander, and their scandalous reflecting upon Good Men, is nothing, but what must be in course expected: If it be a *Good Man* that hath spoken unkindly of us, we owe so much to his Character, as to examine the reasons of his saying what he hath said of us; perhaps, he did not speak what he is charg'd with against us; Or, if he did, it might be to a Friend, to tell us of our Fault in a Christian and Brotherly way; or possibly he might drop somewhat unawares to our Prejudice, without thinking or designing any Harm: for tho' it is a *Good Memento*, given by a sacred Writer, *Whether it be to Friend or Foe, talk not of other Mens Lives; and if thou canst, without Offence, reveal them not*; yet sometimes the Current of the Discourse of the Company we are engag'd in, may force a little Impertinence this way from a *Wise*, and a *Wary* Man. Good Men ought al-

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ways to speak tenderly of one another; and rather to *check*, than to *side with* any thing said to the Disadvantage of a virtuous Person: But sometimes the most circumspect Person may be so far off of his Guard, as to break the Rule of Discretion, and of that Charity which obligeth us to cover our Neighbour's Faults, tho' he doth for the most part strictly observe it: *For there is one that slip-peth in his Speech, but not from his Heart, and who is he that hath not offended with his Tongue?* But further, if the Person who hath abused us be an *implacable Enemy*, to fret at his Railing would be the greatest Absurdity we can be guilty of; since 'tis the Maxim of those, who are in the Gall of Bitterness, to lash us as severely as they can, in order to fetch Blood from us, and to throw a great deal of Dirt, in hopes that some will stick. But than where is our Prudence all the while, that we gratify and glut their Revenge by our Fretfulness, and sacrifice our Soul and Peace to their implacable and affronting Temper? For what is this but to put it into the Power of every unreasonable Man to make us as uneasy as he pleaseth? Again, if it was a *Friend* that we are told hath spoken any thing to our Discredit; he did it either *unwarily*, or *designedly*; if *designedly*, we can only forgive

give him, and do him any Kindness as readily as we would to another Man: But when we have detected one who professeth Friendship, and with whom we have entrusted our Secrets, to be false: we may, nay we ought, in Prudence to avoid such frequent and familiar Converse as we had with him before: for no Man is oblig'd to cherish a *Snake* in his Bosom: Forgiveness of Injuries do's not include in it so much as that comes to. In this Sense a Great Man's distinction had as much *Innocence* as *Wit* in it, *we read that we are to forgive our Enemies, but no where that we are to forgive our Friends.* But possibly our Friend never said what he was represented to have said, or he may have reveal'd somewhat unwarily which had better been stifled; If it be so, we can't follow better Advice than this: *Admonish a Friend, it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more: Admonish a Friend, it may be he hath not said it, and if he have, that he speak it not again; Admonish a Friend, for many times it is a Slander, and believe not every Tale.* We must not be easy to hear an Accusation against an experienc'd Friend; nor listen to every *insidious* Surmise, for oftentimes 'tis an Artifice contriv'd by our Enemies to dissolve a

solid and usefull League of Amity between two worthy Persons.

I might go on, in the *last* place, to shew what Considerations might be drawn to pacify our Resentments, from a regard to the Degree and Rank which the Person who injures us bears in the World, with relation to our selves: as, are they our *Superiours*? Then in point of *Modesty*, we ought to bear it the more patiently; for it signifies little to contend with our Betters, or those who are more Fortunate in the World; yielding soonest pacifieth the Wrath of the Proud and Insolent: Indeed as an *Inferiour* ought to speak respectfully of a *Superiour*; so a *Superiour* ought to speak tenderly of an *Inferiour*: for as the Honour of a *Superiour* depends upon his Reputation; so the very Subsistence of an *Inferiour* often depends upon his Good Name: However, if a *Superiour* is Tyrannical in this respect; Submission may be the best Remedy and Expedient to incline him to speak otherwise for the future: If it be an *Inferiour*, it is the more generous when you have told him fairly and roundly of his Fault, in order to his Amendment, presently to forgive him. Moreover, in the *4th* place, I might shew you how it may be of use to consider, how a Person speaks; whether *seriously*, or with

a *pleasant* and *facetious* Air; for those *Liberties* are allowable in the House of *Feasting*, which would be improper in the House of *Mourning*: And we are not only to mind *what* is said, but also *how* it is said, and the Occasion that introduc'd it: for, for want of relating such sort of particular Circumstances, that which very often was inoffensive and entertaining, at *the first hearing* sounds harsh and disagreeable, and will not bear to be told at *second Hand*; making the worst of it, to *forget* and to *forgive*; to be more Innocent our selves as to this particular is most advisable and generous: for the ripping up old Sores doth but increase and enrage them; widening Breaches, and lengthening Quarrels, till sometimes they end in Blood: there are sometimes unaccountable Misunderstandings merely for want of debating the Matter with our Neighbour himself: In short, if some Persons, who constantly live at Random, speak so too, they are the more to be pitied, and their reviling ought to be despised.

For what hath been deliver'd, I hope, we are convinc'd, that as on the one Hand, 'tis beneath the great Spirit and design of a Christian Temper greedily to seek after the Praise of Men; so on the other Hand, 'tis inconsistent with it to be longer impatiently

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uneasy under the unjust Censures and Disesteem of the World ; and to decline it with too nice and superstitious an Anxiety : how often have many noble Designs been neglected, and laid aside purely upon the account of this Piece of Cowardise ?

I advance now to consider these Words, as they caution us against too forward a regard to what we hear those we converse with say, in a detracting manner, against others, as we would not have our own Faults aggravated, or our Failings expos'd, or any little Story of our selves credited : So we should be so far from countenancing those who serve others so ; that we should always take the Part of the *Absent* Person, who is abused, if his Case will admit of a Vindication : for we are to do by our Neighbour as we our selves would be done by, and owe him that Candour which he oweth to us, remembering that his Reputation is as dear to him, as our own is to our selves : 'Tis an easy thing, and a cheap Kindness to speak as civilly of our Neighbour as we can ; but 'tis much less Trouble to say nothing against him, and to abstain from bespattering him, unless we are infected with a great deal of ill Nature : Could we but be brought off of this Vice, we should be in a State of Peace in our own Minds, and with all
others,

others, except those who are Enemies to Peace, and delight in Strife and Contention.

To make some practical Improvement of the Premises; next to our Care to live so circumspectly as to deserve no ones ill Word, let us bring our selves to as much Indifference as 'tis possible, to the Praise of Men, and the relieving Honour of one another: for let Men be never so inquisitive, and fret themselves as much as they please, every Man's Thought and Tongue are his own, and will follow the Sway of their Temper, nor can the Anxiety of others restrain them. And since *happy is the Man whom the Lord commendeth*, let us keep up a constant and awfull Sense of God's Omnipresence, that we may behave our selves so as to be sure of the Friendship, Love and Esteem of Angels, and Saints triumphant in the glorious Regions above. Wicked Men will vilifie the Good; and good Men here below may sometimes misunderstand one another; for there is no Fence for the best of Men against the Flail of an ill Tongue; but they cannot misunderstand one another there, where their pure Consciences will be transparent to one another: And when we have used our best Endeavours, in a modest way, to set Things in a true Light, it is not worth while in the mean time to be too jealous of the Event at present. Lay aside all faint-hearted An-

xiety: If we have a good Report, let us thank God for the Blessing, and make the best use of it: and if we have an ill Report undeservedly, let us bear this, as we would other Misfortunes, with that Patience which becomes a Christian: And whereinsoever we know our selves faulty, by Indiscretion and Follies, let us take the Admonitions of our Friends kindly; and be carefull to amend what is wrong and culpable: Let us most sincerely repent, if we have been too forward to *speake*, or *but to think* ill of others; and above all, let us abhor that Spirit of Faction and Presumption, which the *Troublers of our Israel* have sent abroad amongst us; I mean the speaking Evil of Dignities, and running down *Princes*, and *Prelates* with most monstrous and impudent Calumnies. How much better would it become every one of us to mind our own Business, and not to meddle with Things too high for us?

The Vices against which I have form'd this Discourse, are very handsomely expos'd by inspired Authors, and those of the next Class below them; from them we learn how to carry our selves unblameably in the worst of Times. Honour and Shame is in Talk, and the Tongue of Man is his Fall; where no Wood is, there the Fire goeth out; so
where

where there is no Tale-bearer, there Strife and Confusion ceaseth. A backbiting Tongue hath disquieted many, and driven Men from Nation to Nation: Strong Cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the Houses of great Men: Whoso hearkeneth unto it shall never find Rest, and never dwell quietly. A sinfull Man disquieterh Friends, and maketh Debate among them that be at Peace. A Man of an ill Tongue is dangerous in his City, and he that is rash in his Talk shall be hated. The Stroke of the Whip maketh Marks in the Flesh; but the Stroke of the Tongue breaketh the Bones: Many have fallen by the Edge of the Sword, but not so many as have fallen by the Tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the Venom thereof; who hath not drawn the Yoke of it, nor hath been bound in the Bonds of it; for the Yoke of it is a Yoke of Iron, and its Bands are Bands of Brass: The Death thereof is an evil Death; the Grave were better than it: It shall not have Rule over them that fear God, neither shall they be burnt with the Flame thereof: Such as forsake the Lord shall fall into it; it shall burn in them and not be quenched; it shall be sent upon them as a Lion, and devour them as a Leo-

Leopard: Hedge up thy Lips with Thorns, weigh thy Words in a Ballance, and make a Door and Bar for thy Mouth: Beware thou slide not by it, lest thou fall before him that lieth in Wait.

St. James in his *third* Chapter, at the thirteenth Verse, supplies me with a very proper Conclusion for this Discourse: *Who is a wise Man and endued with Knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom. But if ye have bitter Envyings and Strife in your Hearts, glory not. This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is Earthly, Sensual, Devilish. For where Envyng and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work. But the Wisdom that is from above is first Pure, then Peaceable, Gentle and Easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocrisie, And the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace.*

THE

THE Eighth DISCOURSE

TREATING of the
THIRD HEAVEN.

II. COR. XII. 2, 3, 4.

I knew a Man in Christ above fourteen Years ago (whether in the Body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) such an one caught up to the Third Heaven.

And I knew such a Man (whether in the Body, or out of the Body, I cannot tell: God knoweth)

How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable Words, which it is not lawful for a Man to utter.

IN order to give a *competent* Explication of this Scripture, it may be proper to mind you, that *St. Paul* is not speaking *here* of a *meer Extasy* or *Vision*;

sion; and consequently, that what he refers to in *this* Place, must be some greater *Transaction*, than what he relates of himself at the xxii *Chap.* of the *Acts*.

'Tis true indeed, his *Preface* to this *Narrative* runs thus; *I will come to Visions and Revelations of the Lord, Verse the 1st*, but then several Expressions do plainly imply, that there was a *Local Translation* of *St. Paul's* Person, when this Vision was communicated to him, tho' being overfet by the surprise of this strange Occurrence, he had quite forgot *one* very remarkable circumstance (*viz*) whether 'tis only a *Removal* of his *Mind*, or a *Translation* of his *intire* Person, consisting both of *Mind* and *Body*.

Besides, our *Apostle* gives a full Account of what befell him under the *Extasy*, recorded in the Book of the *Acts*: But most of the Occurrences which befell him, during the time of his being translated into Paradise, as far as the *Third Heaven*, were *too Glorious* to be made intelligible to *sinful Men*, whilst confined to this *lower* State, which is rather appointed for a Tryal of their *Faith* and *Patience*, than for vast Improvements of themselves in Knowledge. Good Men themselves might be too impatient of continuing in their *present* Life,
under

under *very* bright Displayances of the glorious Scenes above; for we find, that *even an Apostle* could not bear these Discoveries with the *Humility* of a *Man*, without the Application of some sort of *Thorn*, which was proper to allay the *Tumours* of *Vanity*.

2^{dly}, I desire you to take notice, that *St. Paul*, in this Narrative, makes mention of *two different* Places, *Paradise* and the *Third Heaven*, which (tho' *Benedictus Aretius*, and *Dr. Hammond*, seem to take for *one* and *the same* Place, notwithstanding their being expressed by *two different* Terms) are undoubtedly *distinct* one from the other. *Grotius*, *Whitby* and others agree with me in *this* particular: The Apostle saith of himself, that he was caught up *eis τὸ Παράδεισον*, into *Paradise*; but when he speaketh of the *Third Heaven*, he doth not say *into the Third Heaven*; but only, *ὡς τὸ εἶναι ἐκεῖ*, as far as the *Third Heaven*. The meaning of which Words I take to be probably this: whilst he was in *Paradise*, he was caught up into those Bounds of *Paradise*, which was furthestmost from us; and where he might have a View of that extremity of the *Third Heaven*, which is nearest to *Paradise*, and the Orb in which we dwell: Just, as you know, we have a *fainter* sight of the Glory of a *very remote* Star

Star from our *little Point* of the Creation, when we see but the *Outside* and the *Surface* of it at a very great distance.

Wherefore 3dly, there is no necessity to suppose, with Dr. *Whitby*, that since the *Apostle* speaketh of *two different* Places, he must consequently speak hear of *two* Translations of his Person: But, according to the *Construction* given, all this *Vision* might be at one and the same *Time*; and in one and the same *Place*.

I hope, I may depend upon your *Courtesy*, for an *attentive* Remembrance of these *Premises*, because the remainder of my Discourse may be so much the shorter for it, without being *obscure* and unintelligible. It will be Work enough, for a *single Sermon*, to make a *Disquisition* about the most probable meaning of this *Term*, the *Third Heaven*. And indeed, if I do any degree of Justice to the *Idea*, which this expression was designed to *denote*, I must give considerable Light to the whole Narrative. But before I enter upon this *Enquiry*, I must take liberty to make two *Practical* Remarks upon a *Clause* in my *Text*: it is repeated, and therefore must not be overlook'd: the Words are these, *whether in the Body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell: God knoweth.*

From

From this Passage I *first* observe, that our *Apostle* here is an Example of *Humility* to his *Successors*, in the Office of *Governing*, *Instructing*, and Admonishing the People of God. And I hope, as I have begged his Assistance by Prayer for the Guidance of the *Divine Spirit*, in my Meditations upon *this Scripture*, that I shall offer no Comment upon it, but such as is agreeable to Divine Truth, and consistent with that *Reverence*, which we all owe to the *Word of God*. Hence also we learn, to be no further curious in our Thirst after Divine Truth it self, than as certain *Measures* and *Manifestations* of it are useful, to increase our *Admiration* of the *Majesty* of God, and our due Sense of the *Worth* and *Glory* of those *Worlds*, which will hereafter be bestowed on those, who sincerely love and faithfully serve him, from a *filial* Principle of Heart.

2dly, Our *Apostle's* *doubting*, and not presuming to *determine* whether he was in the Body, or out of the Body, when he was caught up into Paradise, as far as the Third Heaven, doth not only check the *intemperate* Curiosity of some *School-men*, who would pretend to determine this Difficulty, and take upon them to start a *Query*; whether *St. Paul* could be *out of the Body* (tho'

(tho' but for a *short* time) without being *justly* said from thence to have *died* for the time being; or whether, in case his *Soul*, for that time was Translated without his *Body*, it was only the Soul *peculiar to Man*, without that *inferiour* sort of Soul, which *Beasts* enjoy in common with *Men*; since *this alone* might be sufficient to keep his Body alive, in the *Sense* and *Gradation* of an *Animal Life*, upon the *Earth*, whilst his SPIRIT (which in the strictest way of speaking is the *Soul Humane*) was traversing *sublimier Regions*, and enjoying the *superlative Honour* of *Miraculous Visions*: I say, the Apostle's Doubt ought not only to restrain us from indulging our Curiosity to such an inordinate degree, but is also very improvable to us; as it contributes very liberally towards *Confirming* our Belief of the *Immortality of the Soul*, and of its *Subsistence* in a State of *Life and Sensation* before the *Resurrection*; even when this Body of ours ceaseth to live, and to be animated by our Souls. Our Souls need not depend upon our *Bodies*, as *Accidents* do upon their *Subjects*, tho' in many Cases the *Thoughts* of our Souls are somewhat limited, by the *State* and *Alteration* of our Bodies, as long as they are united to them. The Apostle's *Doubt* plainly implies,

plies, that he was persuaded that the *Soul* can subsist without a *Body*; and of course it followeth, that in the *Fundamental Strata* and Groundwork of it, the *Soul* is *diverse* from the *Body*; that is to say, the *Substance* of the *one* is different from the *substance* of the *other*: for otherwise there could be no place left for *such a Doubt*.

Moreover, this declared Capacity of the *Soul* to subsist, without any *Union* or *Relation* to a *Body*, makes it highly probable that the *Soul* doth so subsist, and live a life peculiar to it self, between the *Death* and the *Resurrection* of the *Body*: For, since the *Bodies* of Men are not reduced to nothing by *Death*, we have no reason to suspect that the *Souls* of *Bad Men* (much less that those of *Good Men*) are *Annihilated*, if they can subsist of themselves, when the *Bodily structure* is dissolved into *Dust* and *putrefaction*, and the *Form* of the *Mind* hath a *Distinct Ground-work* and *Descent* from the *Form* and *Contexture* of the *Body*. Other *Arguments* might be brought to strengthen *this* Assertion; but this was the properest for me to insist upon in my *present Essay*; and if it be carefully observed, it will very much illustrate what I shall afterwards suggest concerning the *Third Heaven*, forasmuch as this Term

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includeth

includeth in it a *Third State* of Humane Souls; whereas no *such* State could belong to our Souls, if nothing intervened between the *Death* and the *Resurrection* of the Body, and a perfect *insensibility* of the Soul did commence with the *Corruption* of the Body; Souls that *are not* being in no State at all.

My *Practical Premises* being dispatched, I proceed now to explain, as well as I am able, the import of this *expression* the *Third Heaven*. And I hope the *Candour* of my *Auditors* will keep them from condemning *this Enquiry* as *absurd*, or *improper*, or *unlikely to succeed*, till you have heard the *improvement* which I shall make of it in the *Process* of my *attempt*.

Though it cannot be *Possible*, or *lawful* for us * (since it was not so for St. Paul) to express many occurrences of either the Glorious Regions of *Paradise*, or of those of the *Third Heaven*: yet, since *whatever* places both these *denominations* are designed to denote, it is certain our *Divine Writer* had very wise reasons for preferring these *Characters* of the *places intended*, before any other names for them. I

* Note that the word *ἐξου* may be rendred possible, tho' in the 4th, verse of this Chapter it is rendred lawful; Or, which is more probable it may have both these meanings.

hope, I shall not be justly charg'd with running counter to those *Mementos* of *Modesty*, which I have already drawn from one *Clause* of my *Text*, if I presume to Enquire why those two Places (whereever situated) are rather *Characterized* by the Terms of my *Text* than by any other: for we cannot think that the *terms* of the *Second* or the *Fourth* Heaven might have been as proper as the *Third*, if the Apostle had thought fit to have called the place hereby designed by another Term, without the direction of the *Holy Ghost*. That there is a *Third* Heaven can be none of the ἀποκρυφισματα, those Secrets which St. Paul was obliged to withhold from us; for it is a truth Revealed in this very *Scripture*: Nor can an Enquiry into the Reason why we may *rationaly* believe the said place to be so called, be upon good grounds, *judged* or *declared* to be either *Presumptuous*, or *Impertinent*; forasmuch as, without doubt, it is called the *Third*, for such very good reason, as its having been called the *Eighth*, *Ninth*, or *Eleventh* could never have answered and satisfied. Give me leave therefore to inquire for what places these names are assigned, and why assigned unto them.

Now, in order to explain this *Character*, it may be proper to speak something *first*

of the Term *Heaven* in general; and *secondly*, to Enquire why the place here referred to is particularly called the *Third Heaven*.

First, as to the Term *Heaven*, it is a Term of large extent in the various *acceptations* of it thro'out the *Bible*: for there is a *Plurality* of Heavens: And when our *Saviour* was Baptised they were all opened before him, lifting up the Heads of their Gates to shew their Readiness to receive the King of Glory. The Term *Heavens* denoteth sometimes no more than our own *Atmosphere* just above us; Hence we read of *the Fowls of Heaven*, that is, of the *Air*: accordingly we find *Zech. viii. 12.* that *there are lower Heavens, which give Dew*. Sometimes it denoteth all the Regions of Space besides our own Globe: Thus *Heb. iv. 14.* St. *Paul*, speaking of *Christ* faith, *He was made higher than the Heavens*. We read of some that are already extant but *shall not be hereafter*: *Is. li. 6.* *The Heavens shall vanish like Smoak*; again, others which are not yet *in being*, shall be hereafter; for it is written *Is. lxxv. 17.* *I create new Heavens*. And St. *Peter* speaks of a *New Heaven*, as well as of a *New Earth*, in which dwelleth Righteousness; that is, an Earth wherein Righteousness becomes

comes *Irreversible* in all its Inhabitants, and all the examples of it are past all Tryal, being seated in a Pure State of *Rewards*: Otherwhile, this Term is taken for the Planets nearest our own, and by a Figure for the *Angels which preside over them Dan. iv. 26. The Heavens do Rule*: Hence in the *New Testament*, it is taken for the *Governments, Grandees and Potentates of the Earth*: Our Saviour himself used it in this *Metaphorical Sense* when *Matt. xxiv. 29.* he foretold. *The Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken.*

Among the Regions of the Heavens there are large *Distributions*: Some of them were inhabited by the Angels, during their State of *Tryal*, answerable to our *First Paradise*: That was the *Heaven* from which *Lucifer* fell, with a dreadful train of *Rebels* against God. It is the *First Station* which he is said to have forsook: some parts of that Heaven where the Old Worlds that were inhabited by Good Angels, before they were *colonised* into a better Region, and confirmed in unalterable Bliss, by the Gift of an indefectible Holiness. Other parts of it are the present *Mansions* of the Holy Angels, who by turns in vast Multitudes are dispersed up and down in the Air, Adjacent to the Earth, to be *Ministring Spirits to*
M 3 *the*

the Heirs of Salvation. Other Heavens are the *confinements* of *Bad Angels*: Among the present Seats of the *Blessed Angels*, some are enlightened with more *fulgid* manifestations of God's presence and Majesty than others: Hence we read *Zech. vi. 5.* of *the Four Spirits of the Heavens*; and in the *Prophet Daniel* of *Gabriel's* standing always before God.

There are also Regions of Heaven, allotted for the rest of *Separated Souls* till the *Resurrection*: Our Lord tells us that there are many Mansions in his Father's House, some for their accommodation *before* the Resurrection; others for the place of their abode *after* it; and 'twas of the *last* Division of them that the *Apostle* spake, when he said, *David is not ascended into the Heavens*; which words import, that *David* had not *as yet* ascended into any Heaven *with his Body*; nor indeed with *any* part of his Person, into that *most Glorious* Heaven, which at present is not *possessed* by *Holy Humane* Souls, nor even by the *Holy Angels* themselves; but is *reserved* for them hereafter: However, the *Spirit* of *David* is already gone into those Regions of *Holy Separate Minds*, of which *Christ* spake, in his promise to the *Penitent Thief*, when he said, *This Day shalt thou be with me*

me in Paradise? Of *Paradise* I shall speak in my *next* Discourse, as it is the Character of the State of *Holy* Souls departed, in the Interval of their existence between *Death* and the *Resurrection*: my business now is to shew, that *the Third Heaven* is the place of Residence, which is allotted for the *Blessed after the Resurrection*; let us therefore inquire why it is so called. Now *that* Place may be so called for more than *two* Reasons: For *first*, it may be called the *Third Heaven* from the order of its *situation*, in respect of its distance from the place where we live: Tho' the *Dimensions* of all the Heavens are very spacious, yet they may be *distributed* in their *whole extent* into *Three* grand Divisions. As there are *three Persons* in the *one glorious Godhead*, who is the Builder and Maker of all things: So the *Heavenly Creations* may have three Distributions appropriated to the Honour of *Father, Son, and Spirit*; and our *Earth*, in all probability, may be the farthest off from us, just as the *Holy of Holies* was from the people of the *Jews* in the *Temple*.

2dly, *The Seat of the Blessed, after the Resurrection*, may be called the *Third Heaven*, from the order of *Time* in which it was, or will be created. As it is very

probable that the Worlds, inhabited by Angels, were created a long while before our own Orb, according to the Judgment of *St. Basil*, and several other *Learned* and *pious Fathers*; so 'tis no less probable, that there will be a *New Creation* at the *General Day of Judgment*, when the Elements shall melt with a fervent heat: and that those *Convulsions of Nature* will, in the Hand of the Great *Architect* of Worlds, produce a more beautiful *Structure* than ever was in being before. *St. Paul* saith that he was wrapt up *into Paradise*, and heard unspeakable words in it; but, as I observed before, when he speaketh of the *Third Heaven*, he expresseth himself only, *as far, as* just to see it a distance, that is, to see the place where it will be, when it shall be *finished*, and *peopled* with *perfected* Angels and Men. For tho' all *Holy Angels*, and all *Holy Souls of Men* are now *Happy*, yet they are to be more *Glorious* hereafter: But notwithstanding this supposed Creation *in reserve*, God may be said to have rested from all his work of *Creating* (strictly speaking) since the Matter of which it will consist is already in being, and wants only to be refined by the *General Conflagration*, that a *New World* may, by an astonishing sort of Generation (in which God the *Father, Son*
and

and *Holy Ghost* have worked and hitherto do work) arise out of the *ashes* of an *Old* one.

Thirdly, The seat of the Blessed, after the Resurrection, may be called the *Third Heaven*, from the Order of Dignity, which belongs to those sublimer Hierarchies, which may at present inhabit it, tho' not in its most perfect Beauty, nor clothed with their own highest Perfection.

Or *fourthly*, It may be called a *Third Heaven*, from the Order of Glory, by which the Souls of Good Men, when admitted into it, will be raised beyond their former Degrees of attainments, in a *First* and *Second* World before it. We see God's daily method is to raise his Works gradually to Perfection: *Time* hath *many* Harvests; But *Eternity* can have but *one*, which may be called the Harvest of *all Duration*; when every thing that is excellent shall have arrived to its maturest pitch of Perfection. God the *Father* Made all Angels and Men; God the *Son* redeemed Men, and gave the Grace of being, *confirmed in Holiness*, to the *Good* Angels, tho' he did nothing for the Recovery of the *bad ones*: and all Three, one God blessed for ever, will *then*, and there, Glorify his Elect with their highest Glory, and keep an Undisturbed and Eternal

nal Sabbath with them, in securest Peace and highest Joy.

Ought we not now to make some *Practical Improvement* of what hath been delivered? St. *Paul* saw the Skirts of the *Third Heaven*; or, according to some, St. *John*; but this *opinion* is *groundless*; for who can imagine that the Messenger of Satan was sent to buffet St. *Paul*, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of Revelations that were communicated to St. *John*? St. *Paul*, I say, saw the Skirts of the *Third Heaven*; but it will be your own Faults if you don't hereafter *traverse* it all over, and partake of the glories of it. For tho' we are not all *Apostles*, we are all *Christians*. And some Commentators tell us, *a Man in Christ*, in this place signifies *a Christian*; tho' I must confess, I take the words ἐν Χριστῷ to be an *Hebraism*, and join'd, in the mind of the Divine Writer, with the participle ἀπαρτίτα: if I am right in this Conjecture, *By Christ* would have been an *happier version*, and the meaning of the words is, that the *Apostle*, whether St. *Paul* or St. *John*, was caught up into Paradise, as far as the *Third Heaven*, by the extraordinary assistance and exertion of the Power of *Christ*.

But, leaving both these Interpretations

to shift for themselves, since we are all Christians in *Name*, and it is our own fault if we are not so in *Spirit* and in *Truth*; we have it in our Power to secure such an Interest in God, as at length not only to see, but to possess the *Third Heaven*: Christ has opened a Way into it, and is gone before us to prepare a place for us: O lift up your Eyes towards *Heaven*, big with Treasures of Delight and Glory for all *Penitent Believers*! you have a noble prospect set before you: How bountiful is our God in offering so magnificent a World to us! How amazing Powerful and Wise must the Author of them needs be! Sure this Reflection must raise your *Devotion*; enliven your *Faith*, and confirm your *Patience* in doing well. Prize your Immortality, I beseech you; Let not Souls, born for *Three* Worlds, debase themselves by thoughtfulness for no more than *one*; and that too the *meanest* of the *Three*. Prize your *Christianity*, for it is this that Displays the *Third Heaven* to the Minds of Men: There are no such Draughts of Glory; no such Prospects and Plans of Bliss in the Gardens of *Alcinous*, in the *Elysium* of *Virgil*, or the *Ideas* of *Plato*, or the Researches of *Socrates*: Nay the *Pisgab* of Moses, tho' an *Holy Mount*, was not high enough to afford so clear a
View

View of the true *Hesperides*. *Immortality* is brought into full Light by the Gospel. *Christ*, who is the *Truth*, hath discovered it; *Christ*, who is the *Way*, by his Mediation leadeth us (tho' defac'd with Tears, and dejected with Shame for our Guilt) into the presence of the *Living God*: Yea, *Christ*, who is our *Life*, keeps our *Souls* alive in a *better* World, when released from our *Bodies*; and will *quicken* our *bodies* at the *Last Day* (for even this part of our Life is hid with *Christ* in *God*) into an *incorruptible* Contexture, never to *die* any more. Then we shall be like the *Angels Immortal* in our *whole* Person; free from the Danger of *Temptation*, *Guilt*, or *Death*. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable Gift.

Seeing we look for such an Heaven, what manner of Men ought we to be in all manner of Godly Conversation? What *ardours* ought we to have for God, and the Habitation of his Holiness? What Zeal for his Honour and Service? What care to fit our Souls for it? What a fervent Love for the *Spiritual* good of our Neighbours, since they are capable of so noble an Inheritance, undefiled in the Heavens that fadeth not away? Since, I say, we have such a reserve of Interest in the *remotest* and most *resplendent* part of God's *Creation*, let not our
Thoughts,

Thoughts, and *Hope*, and *Passions*, be confined to this lowermost region of it. How much better is it to take the Prophets Advice, and *lift up our eyes to Heaven*? *Lesser* Creatures than *Man* have *Eyes* to lift towards Heaven, and often do so; but not with *Devotion* towards Him that made both the *Heavens* and *themselves*. They don't read a *God* in their *Motion*; nor entertain themselves with Remarks upon those Wonderful Scenes of Nature: Their *Reason* do's not draw Improvement from their *Sight*, nor can their *Hearts* be lifted up with their *Eyes*: But *Man* can do all this: He can contemplate the Stupendous *Fabrick* over his Head, and, make both his *Understanding* and his *Heart* the better by so doing, if he would but Contemplate them as he ought: 'Tis *thus*, and with this intent, that the *Prophet* would have us lift up our *Eyes* to the *Heavens*.

We can never *Seriously* think of *God's* making us capable of such a *rise* of *Glory* and *Pleasure*, as this *Contemplation* sets (since it contains in it nothing less than a *Succession* of *Three States*, whereof the *latter* exceeds the *foregoing*) but our *Minds* must be well disposed, and struck with the profoundest *Veneration* for *God*: When we think upon his visiting us with so large a
share

share of his Favour, our *Thankfulness* must flow over, as *David's* did before us; *Lord, what is Man, that thou dost visit him, or the Son of Man, that thou dost so far regard him!*

How Stupid and Brutish must that Soul be, whom such a view of his *Futurity* cannot fire with a Love for God, and a *Contempt* of this first *Immediate* Scene, and also of that *lower* sort of Death which removeth us from it! How despicable must all our troubles and disappointments appear to us, whenever we turn our thought towards that vast extent of Space and Duration, which belongs to the *two following* Worlds! Shall Men, made for God, perplex their Thoughts about a *Transient* propriety in *Mire and Clay*? Shall Souls, who have it in their power to enjoy the *amplest* Territories of a *Whole* Creation, suffer a little corner of one of the least Orbs in the *Universe* to engross all their Care? If they will give way to this mean sort of *anxiety*, their *Joy* will be as *precarious*, as is their *possession* of so *fugitive* an Inheritance; and their *disquietude* as certain as their *secular* Losses. This could never be, if Men thought as they should. If their *Heads* had a better turn for a course of *Meditation*, their *Hearts* would have a better turn too; and their *Passions* would glide in a gentler current towards

wards the things of this World, and rowl with a more rapid Stream of *Desire* towards the Joys of that place, where there are *Rivers of pleasure* that can never be exhausted.

Let us think much then upon the *Third Heaven*, and take care, by *Devotion to God*, and *Good works to Men*, to lay up Treasure in Bank there. This is to choole that better portion, which cannot be taken away from us: for Oh! how plenteous is that Goodness which thou hast laid up in store, O God, for those that love thee, and wait for thy coming, whether by *Death*, or *Judgment*, in a stedfast and unmoveable course of Holiness! *All thy works praise thee O Lord; But thy Saints in a more particular manner shall sing of thy Righteousness. They shew the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power. For thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy dominion endureth thro'out all Ages.*

T H E

THE Ninth DISCOURSE,

Being a second PART,

Upon the II. COR. XII. 2, 3, 4.

Treating of PARADISE.

IT has been the business of a former Discourse to aim at *determining* what place is meant by the *Third Heaven*, which we have found to be *the State and abode of the Blessed after the Resurrection*; and to be called so for very good Reasons: I design now to confine my *Meditation* to the place that is called *Paradise* in the Text.

Now by *Paradise*, you must understand *the State and abode of Holy Souls, between the Death and the Resurrection of the Body*: For what place else could our *Blessed Lord* mean, when he said, to the *Penitent Thief* upon the Cross, *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*; for to be with *Christ* must imply in it to be Happy, and where Happy Souls have their dwelling; and to be with him *that Day* must denote

denote the time between the Death and Resurrection of *Christ*; that is a State of Life peculiar and proper to the Soul when discharged from the Body. It remains therefore that we ought to believe, that there is a blissful Repository for the Souls of the Righteous, in which they live with *Peace* and *Comfort*, before the Resurrection shall put them in possession of their *Final* and *Highest* Glory. This place, in the Language of *Christ* and *St. Paul*, is called *Paradise*, not unfitly; because the Devouter *Modern Jews* had made use of the word, for the *Happy State of Good Men in another World*; and the more Vulgar Persons amongst them us'd it for the *Garden of Eden*, in which our *First Parents* were placed. The *Garden of Eden* was so called by them, in imitation of the *Greeks*, who used to call any pleasant place by the name of *Paradise*; being a Term borrowed from the *Persians*, for a place of more delightful situation than ordinary.

Now the *Separate State of Holy Souls* is very properly, on this account, called *Paradise*; for it hath many Characters of *Allusion*, and *Resemblance* to the State of our *First Parents*, in the *Garden of Eden*; whether we consider it as a State of *Indefectible Life*, as Life is opposed to the ex-

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tinction

tinction of our being; or to the *Dissolution* of the *Fabrick* of our whole Person. Or 2dly, as a State of *Life* is sometimes taken for a plentiful and Quiet accommodation of all those things and circumstances, which contribute to the full enjoyment of ones self: or 3dly, as a State of *Preparatory Refinement*, for greater Glory in another State that is to come after it and transcend it.

First, I say, the *separate State of Holy Souls* resembleth the Garden of *Eden*, by the Character of a State of *Indefectible Life*, as it excludes all danger of *extinction*, or dissolution from our Persons. Whether we suppose, with some *Divines*, that in case our *First Parents* had not disobeyed God, by eating the *forbidden Fruit*, they, and as many as had sprang from them, should have lived there for ever, without being removed into another State by Death, or any other way: or that after a certain Period of Time, spent in the way of *Tryal* and *Improvement*, they should have been Translated in their whole Persons, by *Angels* or any other way, without the interposal of any sort of Death, into a more glorious place, I will not take upon me now to determine, tho' I lean towards the latter opinion: I say, whichsoever of these two

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Opinions be the Truest, both of them represent our First Parents out of danger of having their Souls separated from their Bodies, during their stay in Paradise. For supposing that *even then* their Bodies might be *Mortal* and *Corruptible*, in the *Stamina* of their Nature and Fabrick, and the Union of their Souls to their Bodies *dissoluble* by *violent Accidents*: Nay supposing, as some contend, their Souls (whether *Material*, or *Immaterial*) were not *indiscerpible* to *Created Beings* of greater strength than *ours*; yet, 'tis certain, that if they had remained Examples of *persevering* Obedience, both their *Souls* would have been *indiscerpible*, and their *Bodies Immortal*; and the *Union* of both *Indissoluble*, by *Grace*, upon the *Sacramental* use of the *Tree of Life*: So that, whilst they were where they could come at *that*, they could not but enjoy an *inviolat*e subsistence and contexture of both *Soul* and *Body*, in the distinct ground-work of *each* Nature, and the firm *Union* and *Harmony* of *Both*. The being banished for their disobedience from *the Tree of Life*, Guarded by *angry Cherubim*, was that which exposed them to *Dying*: whilst they remained in *Paradise*, they continued alive, and would have continued so *always*, if they had remained *there*, and had had free

recourse to the *Tree of Life*: No *Infectious Air* could then have annoyed them; nor could any pestilential *Crafsis* of the Blood, or Humours have endanger'd the Health, or Vigour of the *whole*, or of *any part* of the *Humane* Composition. Life then had sat as *firm* within them, as an *unexpugnable* Rock, defying all the Assaults of Waves and Storms to displace it.

Now, as without the interposal of *Disobedience*, it would have been thus with the intire compound subsistence of *Soul* and *Body*, in the Garden of *Eden*: So when our Souls are taken out of these Bodies, they are carried in such a way, as Souls can be carried by Good Angels, into a place where Souls cannot perish, or be reduced into nothing, by any Power under the *Omnipotence* of him who made them: And *He* that hath *made* them hath passed his Word for it, that they *are*, and *shall* be present with the Lord, when they are absent from the Body.

And tho' their *Life* is not sensible to us, by the *Breath* and *Speech* of the Body, as it was *here*; yet they feel it in themselves, and discern it in one another; for their manner of discerning it in each other may be perfectly unconceivable to our *Infant Minds*, in our *present* Mode of subsisting,
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and one of those *unutterable* things which it was *impossible* and *unlawful* for St. Paul to explain to us.

Sensation, whenever we pry narrowly into it, appears to have no relation in its own *Nature* and *Properties* to those *Organs* of the Body, upon determinate *applications* whereof we experience *diversified varieties* of it. God, after certain applications of an *Hand*, an *Eye*, an *Ear*, and other parts, doth impress upon us different *affecting modifications* of our *Conscious Principle* within us: But all this is *arbitrary*, and ordained to be so *only* for a while: There is no *Eternal* or *necessary cognation* between the said *portions* of Body, or *applications* thereof, and those *sentiments* of *Joy* and *Pain*, which arise within our *Thinking Substance*, with a *diversified* application of them. They are so ordained for the cementing that *reciprocal reaction*, between the *powers* of the *Mind* and *parts* of the *Body*, by which the *Union* of *Soul* and *Body* is supported: But as soon as this Scene of *Reaction* between them is discontinued, the *Body* returns to the *Passive insensibility* of that *Dust*, out of which it was formed; and the *Mind* returns to its own *free and independent activity* of *Thought*, and displays a Noble variety

of *Consciousness* on the Theatre of its own *single* and *simple* Substance: all the *Ideas* of *Sight* and *Hearing*, together with *Innumerable* others, being excited within it self by God, when the *Ears* and *Eyes* of the Body have lost their *structure*, and cease to *convey* (I ought rather to have said to *seem to convey*) *Ideas* and *Sensations* into the *Mind*. *Death* binds the *Body Hand* and *Foot*, with Chains of *Adamant*, in a state of deep *Sloth* and *Stupidity*; but it knocks off a Fetter from the *Soul*: for this *vile* and *corruptible* Body is but a Fetter to the *Soul*, tho' the *Glorified* Body, with which it will be clothed hereafter, will be no *clog* to it: nay, probably it not only releaseth the *Mind* from all Commerce with an *Earthly* Body, which was once *animated* by it, but from all attendance upon *Matter* in General, for being so much as *occasions* of those *Ideas*, whereof God was ever the *Cause* and *Author*: The *Soul*, in the *Separate State*, may be pleased with the delightful amusements, and sensations of *Light* and *Colours*, without the want of a *Material* Sun, as well as without the use of a *Corporeal* Eye; God becoming *Sun*, and *Eye*, and *Place*, and *Orb*; and every thing else that is *requisite* to it: And no one, but he who knows not the *Power* of
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God, and attends not to the *Nature* of *Thought*, will ask how these things can be, only, because we don't find it thus with our selves just at present. Have we not a fore-taste of it in some Pleasures of the Soul, which support it under such Pains as arise peculiarly from its Union with the Body; some of which it is not in the Power of *Free Will* to prevent beforehand, or to remove afterwards; and others which it *can*, but *will* not when they cannot be *prevented*, or removed without its staining it self with *Guilt*? There is no need to appeal to the *supernatural* transports of *Martyrdom* to prove this; for the grateful serenity of our *Mind*, which (like the still but entertaining sensation, which ariseth from *Health*, founded in a Good Constitution, that is kept up by *Chearfulness* and *Sobriety*) doth Crown every *Rational* instance of *Self-denial*, gives all virtuous Persons a sufficient proof of it.

Secondly, The Separate State of Holy Souls is very properly called *Paradise*, inasmuch as it resembleth the *Original* State of Man in *Eden*, by being a State of *Life*, in the sense of the Word, as it is taken for a *Quiet and plentiful supply of all those things which contribute to the full enjoyment of ones self*: Such was the State of

Adam before he fell: He had every thing *proper* for him, without *anxiety* of *Mind* or *toil* of *Body*: Nothing was denied him, but an *Indulgence* of his *Senses*, in a *Degree* *pernicious* to their *Master*, and *Sacriligious* to him who *made* him, and gave him all things liberally to enjoy: His *Understanding* was denied nothing, but the *experimental* Knowledge of the difference between *Good* and *Evil*; nor his *Will* any thing, but an exemption from depending upon, and being *Subject* to God's *Will*; nor his *Body* any thing, but *Fruit* *deadly* in its *effects*, whilst it was *fair* to the *Eye*: Now thus it is with the *Soul* in its *Paradise*; For *It* hath 1st, *Quiet*. 2^{dly}, *Innocence*. 3^{dly}, *Knowledge*. 4^{thly}, *Large* and *adequate* *Objects* for its *Passions*, in the *Capacity* of a *Creature* of *Love*, *Hope* and *Desire*.

First, Good *Souls* in *Paradise* have *Quiet*: There the *Wicked* cease from troubling from without, and *Fears* from within; There the *Servant* is free from his *Master*; There the *Prisoners* rest together; they hear not the *Voice* of the *Oppressor*. All former *Guilt* is known to be forgiven, and no *Temper* can reach them to ensnare them into new *Sins*, so as that they shall again stand in need of being justified again; nay they have no corrupt inclination in themselves to
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prompt them to contract *fresh* Guilt: for *Concupiscence* died with the *Body*. All their Tears are wiped away; all their old anxieties are vanished. They have no uneasy apprehensions about the changes of *Future*, much less of any such great change, as that *Mortality* which some are every day undergoing; and which all of us ought to expect to make the wisest preparations against it: Some by fear, and all of us by the tendency of every thing that we do, *die daily*: The very actions, which are necessary to keep the Wheels of *Animal Life* in motion, cause the organs of the *Body* to want repairing; and the repairing them at least insensibly wear them away. So justly was it said to *Adam*, *In the Day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. II. 17. altho' he did not actually expire and give up the Ghost, as soon as he had eaten the Forbidden Fruit. For indeed, *what is our Life but a Vapour?* What is the Life of a *Methusalem*, but a long Dying? Our Consciousness of our Sins shews *Death* certain to us, and for ought we know the *next minute*, so that all our Life long, *through fear of Death, we are Subject to Bondage*.
 * But in *Paradise* this sword will no long-

* *Temporalis vita æternæ comparata mors est dicenda potius quam vita; ipse enim quotidianus defectus corruptionis, quid est aliud quam prolixitas mortis. Greg. in Rom.*

er hang over our Heads: The Continuance of our *Subsistence* will be *certain* to us then, together with a comfortable Sense of it: And the *Character* of Good Souls being fixed there, they are fully satisfied without wavering and misgiving, that *whenever*, or *whithersoever* they shall remove (tho' it should be through a *thousand* Orbs, at different *periods* of Duration) it will be for the better to them. Moreover, the Content which they enjoy is not the product of surfeiting Care and Thoughtfulness for the morrow: But like *the Lillies of the Field*, they toil not, they spin not, nor gather into Barns; and yet their Heavenly Father provideth all things necessary, to compleat the *satisfaction* of their present State. They have Bread to eat *which we know not of*, but this we are sure of, that it is not the Bread of *carefulness*: nor do they sit up late to *enjoy* it, or rise early to *earn* it with *the sweat of their brows*, or by the pangs and throws of an *aching Head or Heart*. Here God gives *sleep* to even his *Beloved* upon these Terms: But *Providence* is never a *Step-mother* to them there, no not in the *shortest* Intervals: His *Favourites* there have other-guests treatment: They always flow in *Plenty* and *Peace*, and no good thing is withholden from

from them: nor doth any thing disturb or annoy their use of the blessings, which they receive from the Divine Bounty; Much less is there any danger of their abusing their *Serene Tranquillity*, by making it an Occasion of *Sloth* and *Lasciviousness*. The *Love of Money* can't pierce them through with many sorrows; nor the Lust of the Flesh, or the Pride of Life allure them to wound their *Conscience* with Sin, and dethrone their *Reason* by so doing: Their Condition *there* hath the *Grandeur* of an *High Estate*, and the *Security* of a *low one*. *Happy* are Souls in *such* a Case, yea *Blessed* are the Dead *in the Lord*, for they rest from their Labours, and their *Good Works* do follow them, to Fight for them against the Assaults of *Evil Angels*; and to secure them the *Society* and *Guardianship* of the *Good ones*.

'Twill in the *next* place be proper to consider the Separate State of *Holy Souls*, as a State of Compleat *Righteousness* and *Integrity*. Every *thinking Substance* (now such is the *Mind of Man*) is a Creature of *Intention*, and directs the bent of its course by some main *governing end* of its *Scope* and *Conduct*: According as that *intention* is *Right* or *Wrong*, the *Conduct* must be *Regular* or *Depraved*; and according to the

the *proportion* of the Degrees of its *Zeal*, in the pursuit of a Right aim, its *Regularity* of *Will* becomes so much the more *perfect* and *beautiful*; in like manner the *Corruption* and *Perverseness*, and *Irregularity* of the Will, in proportion to its earnestness to do ill, is more or less *monstrous* and *disgustful* to the *Spectators* and *Observers* of it: now the State of Holy Separate Souls, being a State of Just Spirits made perfect in Righteousness, must give their Minds an *Heavenly* byass, by *rectifying* and *refining* the *Will* and *Intention*, and rendering their Conduct exactly *inoffensive* and *vigorous*, in a course of obedience to the known Law and Will of God. *There* all the Motions of the *Will* will be entirely *Concentric* with the Will of God, as far as it shall be known, and withall the *Divine Nature* and *Will* shall be known, so far as shall be necessary for Minds of the *Humane* Class and Capacity. In their *foregoing* State the *Flesh* lusted against the *Spirit*; and tho' it could not get the better of the Spirit, and render their Conversation *Bestial* and *Sensual*, as it did the *Hearts* and *Lives* of the *Unregenerate*, who were ruled by the Spirit of Disobedience; yet it tainted the *Regenerate* with some *fainter* and troublesome *velleities* to Evil: and they that keep them-

themselves most *unspotted* from the World, meet with some *Spots* that shew them in the World, tho' they are not *of* the World. For God's Children have their *Spots*, tho' they are not like the Spots of the *Licentious*: For so *Moses* complained of the *Israelites*, *their spot is not the spot of thy Children*: and *David's* Prayer implied no less, when he petitioned to be cleansed from his *Secret* Faults. But in the *Separate* State the Souls of the *Just* are *Immaculate*, clothed with the *White Robes* of Innocence, like the *Lamb of God*, without blemish. Their Palms flourish and bud a fresh with Blossoms like *Aarons Rod*: For, as before they went on Conquering, and to conquer *vicious* inclinations; so now their *Victories* and their *Lawrels*, with which they are crowned for them, never fade or wither in their memories, nor are in danger of being tarnished, by their being hereafter defeated, by their old Enemies rallying their Forces against them: For neither *Devil*, *World* nor *Flesh*, is any longer a Tempter to them: They have not now *an Heart and an Heart*: *one* part of *Self* is not at difference with *another*; They no longer feel a *Civil* War between *Reason* and *Passion*; but all is right; the Soul is *uniform and steady* in its ambition to please God, and

no powerful Agents of an higher order of Beings are suffered to practise their attempts upon it, in order to pervert them from the *Safe Paths of Duty and Uprightness*. Thus to live up to the Glory of God, is to live up to the Dignity of their Nature; and that is to *live indeed*.

Thirdly, The separate State of Holy Souls is a State of *Satisfactory Knowledge*: Their Knowledge is *Satisfactory*; for their Understanding is conversant with the greatest Objects, and the noblest Truths, and sees them in a clear Light, for God is their *Book* and their *Interpreter* too; and their Knowledge is truly *Divine*, because (their practise being always conformable to it) it is no occasion of their Condemning themselves, or of being made uneasy by an Upbraiding Conscience.

What poor Degrees do *Mankind* attain to in Knowledge here? An *Universal Genius* is hardly found in an whole Age together: The *grossest cares* betray the *largest Bulk* of them into *Stupidity*: Too too many, like the Beasts that perish, overlook the works of *Nature* and *Providence*, and mind nothing but the *surface* of both, without minding their *drift* and *design*. And the more *curious Inquirers* into the *inmost structure* of the *Creation*, do, by their most *Successful* Scrutinies, rather obtain the pleasure

fire of more *affectingly* admiring their Author, than of *Satisfying* their impatient Thirst after *Knowledge*. The most *Learned* seem rather to be pleased that they know as much, as the *extent* of their *Capacity* well improved will permit them to know, than with the *intellectual* Treasures which their searching hath discovered. And the noblest Product of *Study* is a more *Rational Humility*, grounded upon our being *thoroughly* convinc'd of the *inscrutable* greatness of God in his Works, and of our own *Ignorance*. Hence it is that your *Learnedst* Men have always been observed to be most Modest, and averse to a *positive supercilious temper*; and farthest from being very *tenacious* of their own Opinion in *Controverted* Points. They see that most *Disputes* do arise from the Imperfections of Speech, the difficulty of rightly apprehending the meaning of others, Diversity of Education, the Policy of Parties, the Mists of Prejudice on the score of Favour and aversion, a Misrepresenting of the Question: or very often from the narrowness of our Understanding, even when we examine *things, persons or propositions* with the clearest sincerity, and hear others with the fairest and most *teachable* Candour. Upon all these accounts, as well as upon the account of
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of that weariness to the Flesh, which is brought upon us by hard Study, Solomon declared, that *He that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow*: But we shall not *hereafter* see thus darkly through a Glass, but our Meditations will be upon God, and such Objects as will best deserve our intensest Thinking: In a State of a *perfected* Understanding we shall see God by *neater* and more suitable *Ideas* of him; for we shall see him as *he is*, and know him as he is known by Creatures of an *higher* Order. Our *Knowledge* will not only be of the best sort, but come to us in the best manner, since it will come with the greatest ease: Truth will enlighten us from the *Fountain-head*, by direct Rays of Communication from the *Holy Ghost*. We shall have the sight of our Minds not in the least *intercepted* by unruly Passions or Fogs of Prejudice, or cloudy Intervals: Nor will it have that *brackish* and *unsavory* Tincture which it had, when it came to us with a great deal of trouble and pains: We shall not *then* fetch our *Knowledge* from afar, as *Elihu* did *here*, for it will be at hand, and as cheap and clear as *DayLight* is at High Noon in the *fairest* Sky. In short, our Knowledge will be much enlarged with our *Sensations*, since these too will be in-
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tirely New, and such as have been hitherto *unexperienc'd* by us.

Fourthly, The separate Souls of Holy Men will have competent Objects to answer the Stress of those soaring Passions, which they found unsatisfied in a *Former* World. Man is as *great* by his *Desires* as he is *little* by his *Ignorance*; and by his fixing Desires not far short of *Immense*, upon things that cannot certainly be had; and which, when obtained in the *highest* Degree, cannot *satisfie* him, he creates most of his *Uneasiness* to himself. But when his Mind is so *sufficiently enlightned*, as to fix upon an *Omnipresent Infinite Good*, which may be certainly had (if rightly sought for) because *Omnipresent*, and lessened to *none*, nor *in it self*, by being communicated to *All*, and will certainly disappoint no one that depends upon it for Happiness; forasmuch as it is *Infinite*: When I say the Heart of a Man, like *David's* Heart, expostulateth with God and saith, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire in comparison of thee*; then in *this* World he is in the ready road for *Happiness*, and, if he keeps strait forward to the last, will certainly find it in the *next* Life: *There*, I say, he will find it, for Devotion it self could

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not find it perfectly before: for *now* we enjoy God in the lower way of *Ordinances*, and imperfect unsatisfied ardours after him, in lesser proportions and by interrupted Manifestations of his Favour: God hides and withdraws himself sometimes from the *Purest* Souls in their Incarnate State, and gives them occasion to languish and complain, *Why art thou so disquieted, O my Soul; and why art thou so disturbed within thee? Put thy trust in God, for I will yet give him thanks for the Light of his Countenance.* These Suspensions of Comfort are necessary in this World, *sometimes* to humble them, *sometimes* to try their Faith, *sometimes* to increase their diligence in their attendance upon *Prayers, Sermons, Sacraments*, and other means of Grace, and at most times to purify them from that dross, which is found in the *Purest* Saints of a *Militant* Character. These *transient Eclipses* make them set the higher value upon the *Sun of Righteousness*, and cause them to long for the uninterrupted presence of God, with the more fervent and passionate strains of *Desire*. By such Discipline God saith to Good Men, *Seek ye my face*; and their hearts are thereby moved to answer, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek. One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the House of the Lord*

Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his Temple: O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: My Soul thirsteth for thee in a barren and dry Land, where no water is: Have I not remembered thee in my bed, and thought upon thee when I was waking? O Tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong, and he shall comfort thy Heart. Yea, they who now in this present Wilderness look for him, in Holiness shall behold his Power and Glory hereafter, in a better Region where his Loving-kindness shall appear to be better than Life it self. For there they shall be present with the Lord. God is equally present every where, and to every one in his being, but not in his manifestations of himself. Wherefore his promising that we shall be present with him, when we are absent from the Body, must imply that we shall have more moving Ideas of himself, and that brighter displayances of his Glory and Perfections will be communicated to the Righteous in a Future State; and without those Doubts and Interruptions, which before had at times cast a Cloud over them in a State of Warfare, Pilgrimage and Tryal.

Besides a more intimate Communion with God, they will be blessed with the peculiar

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Presence and Glory of the Blessed *Jesus*, who is the great Mediator between *God* and *Man*; with the Society of *Angels* innumerable, and the Souls of Good Men departed. But these *Subjects* will furnish us with Matter for *another* Discourse: and therefore I shall now only exhort you, from the greatness of your Prospect in Paradise, to be encouraged to be *indefatigable* in the discharge of your *Duty*, and your pursuit of *Heaven*. Let nothing cast you down: Let no Disaster, Temptations, or Disappointments sit too heavy upon your Spirits, or overset you with Grief: for no affliction hath befallen you, or can befall you, but what is common to Man here, and may be improved to your Eternal Good hereafter, if it be born with Patience, and increaseth that Faith which raiseth the Heart, and carrieth into Paradise, and renders it a Companion with God. * Where this *inward* Good is secured, no outward Good will be mis'd and wanted: for in his presence every kind of *Merit*, every kind of *Excellency*, every

* Ipse per se placet & per se sufficit ad meritum, sufficit ad præmium, nec extra illum quicquam queritur, quia totum in illo invenitur quicquid desideratur; semper libet eum aspicere, semper habere, semper in illo delectari & illo perfrui. In illo clarificatur Intellectus & purificatur affectus ad cognoscendam & diligendam veritatem. Et hoc est totum bonum Hominis nosse scilicet & amare Creatorem suum.

Bern. de præmio coelesti.

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kind of *Joy* is found; and He alone would be an exceeding great Reward. What can we want when we shall always have it in our power to behold him, to *possess* him for ever, to be always *delighted* in him, and to have a through enjoyment of him: By him the *Understanding* is *clarified*, and the Heart is purified, and disposed for the *Knowledge* and the *Love* of Divine Truth. The *intire Good* of *Humane Nature* consists in *knowing* and *loving* our *Creator*. Why then should sorrow fill our Hearts: Believe in God: Believe in *Christ*, who designs another sort of abode for you, where *sorrow* and *sighing* will fly away, nay where they will find no admission: *Heaviness* may endure for a night in the Tents of Kedar, but Joy cometh on with that *Morning* of *Eternity*, which will have no Evening.

S E R M O N X.

A

CONTEMPLATION

On the D E A T H of the
T H I R D D A U P H I N.

I C O R. X V. 26.

*The last Enemy that shall be
destroyed is Death.*

DEATH, which reign'd with so much power from *Adam* to *Moses*, is still very *Arbitrary* in his *Power* and *Commands*, and *Terrible* in his *Conquests*. A *Third Dauphin* in *France*, and a vast number of *Nobles*, in our *own* and *other* Countries, have fal'n sacrifices to his fury in a very narrow compass of time: there is now left but a very thin Partition between the Crown of *France* and the *Duke of Anjou*. And yet *Innumera-
ble*

ble persons are no more concern'd at this *Dreadful News* than at the Relation of a *Dream*: How soon may another *Royal Flower* be blighted, as soon as blown! In such events *Divine Providence* seems to have a larger Design than only to take an *Old Tyrant* to task. Should he die of *sorrow*, he may die at a juncture *critically* fit to bequeath the same *Terror* and *Desolation*; tho' it will be distributed by a *new* hand thro'out the Neighbouring Kingdoms of his *exorbitant* Dominions.

After so many *Cedars* have been cut down, we should be very presumptuous Flatterers of our selves should we hope to withstand his shocks. Death hath *Fire* and *Hooks*, and *Mattocks* to destroy the brambles of the Wood, as well as *Axes* and *Tempests* to lay bare the roots of the *Oak* and *Cypress*. He is the *last* Enemy that shall be destroyed; and therefore will not be destroy'd in *our* time. However we have this to *alloy* our *Terrors*, that this Conquerour of Conquerours will die at last himself by the violence of his own hands. A time will come when there will be no *Ghosts*, nor *Skeletons* of *Royal*, or of *Inferior* Character, in any one Region of the Universe. The *Graves* shall release their *Prisoners*; and *Hades* shall surrender all its *Naked Souls*, to be reunited to their

proper Bodies. Then all his *Dominions* shall be *depopulated*: His *usurp'd* Majesty will vanish away, and be as imperceptible as the path of an *Arrow* in the *Air*. Then *this*, which hath been the most *durable* and *lasting* *Monarchy* upon the *Earth*, will be quite extinct; and sink under the *unwieldy* burden of its own *Spoils* and *Grandeur*.

At the *end* of *Time* this *formidable* *Tyrant*, which hath so lately come up to the *height* of the *Mountains*, to the sides of *Libanon*, and cut down the *tall Cedars* thereof, and the *choice Fir-trees* thereof: He who hath entred the height of every *Border*; and laid waste the *Forest* of every *Carmel*, and with the sole of his Feet hath dried up all *the Rivers* of *besieged places*: He who hath dismay'd and confounded the *Inhabitants* of many *defenced Cities*; so that they were before him as the *Grass* of the field, and as *Corn* blasted before it is grown up, shall at length be *dethron'd* and *destroy'd* at once: And all those *Bodies* of *Princes* and other *Mortals*, which took *Root* downwards in the *Earth*, shall bear *Fruit* upwards in a vast diversity of *Heavens*. God who knows his abode, his going out, and his coming in, and his *Rage* against *himself* and *his people*, will blot him
him

him out of Being, and destroy him, after he hath first destroy'd all other Enemies: for *the last Enemy that shall be destroy'd is Death.*

There are several *Questions*, which may be ask'd, about this passage of *Scripture*; as 1st, whether our *Apostle* speaks here of *Death Temporal*, *Spiritual* or *Eternal*. 2^{dly}, How the Character of an *Enemy* belongs to *Death*: 3^{dly}, Why it is called *the last Enemy*. 4^{thly}, *How* it will be destroy'd, with the *Consequences* of its *Destruction*. *Lastly*, Whence it comes to pass that *Death* is the last *Enemy* which shall be destroy'd. The first Demand to be answer'd is this: of what *sort* of *Death* doth our *Apostle* speak in this place? I answer, of *Death Temporal*, which is the separation of *Humane Souls* and *Humane bodies*: For 'tis that *Death* which in the 21st *verse* is opposed to the *Resurrection*: *since by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the Dead*. This is the *Death* which *Adam* by his Fall brought upon his posterity, *verse the 22*, *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*. In vain therefore do the Followers of *Origen* seek refuge in this *Scripture*; for that *over-merciful* opinion of theirs, which supposeth, that after a certain

tain *Revolution* of Ages, all the *Damned*, both *Devils* and *Men*, shall be released from their Torments. For as long as there shall be *Spirits* and *Souls* remaining in the Gall of bitterness; blackned with, and hardened in a *malignity of Temper*, which renders them opposite to the Will of God, and to the blessed temper of the Inhabitants of the *World of Glory*; so long *Death spiritual* will be in the World. And, as long as there shall be *fal'n Angels* and *Impenitent Men* tormented in that Fire which is prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels; so long there will be *Death Eternal*. Neither of these two sorts of Death will die: For *Evil Beings* will exist *for ever*, and in their *Torments* too; and therefore will never be recall'd, after they have been banish'd into *Hell* from the *Beatific* Presence of God. The *Condemned* there have no hopes of *release* from their *Misery*: Oh How dreadful must be their State! With what *carefulness* then! With what *clearing of our selves*! With what *Zeal*! With what *Indignation*! ought we to lament our *past* Sins; to forsake *present* ones; and to prevent our falling for the *future*, under the power of Temptations to any *presumptuous* Wickedness!

In answer to the 2d. Query; I assert,
that

that the Character of an *Enemy* belongs to *Death Temporal*: whether we consider it with Respect to *God*; or with Respect to *Man*. This sort of Death is an *Enemy* to *God*, because it not only *defaceth*, but *destroys* a Fabrick of *his* Original contrivance; the Work of his Creation in the first *Husband* and *Wife*; and the Work of his Providence and concurring power, in all the Humane Bodies which have been propagated from that *Primitive Pair*; for the most Innocent *pleasures of sleep* would not increase and multiply Mankind, without his blessing, who form'd *Adam* out of *Dust*, and *Eve* out of a *Rib*.

Death destroys the workmanship of God, not only as it causeth a *Dissolution* of the Body into Dust; but as it *disjoins* the *Souls* of Men from those *Bodies*, which they are *ordain'd* to *actuate*; and whereto they were *United*, as soon as they were *made*. It must be confess'd that the *Divine* and *Nobler* part of the Constitution of *Human* Nature is seated in *the Spirit* of Man: yet he is not perfect in his *Humanity*, whilst the *terrene* part of his *Composition* lies *lifeless* and *corrupted* in the Grave.

Death who is an *Enemy* to *God*, is also an enemy to *Man*; not because it removes him out of one World into another; for
that

that is *improving* and *grateful* to the curiosity of a *soaring* mind; but because it carries him *by halves* into a new World. Indeed the *Soul* by Death becomes a *Traveller* into Seas of *Air* and *Ether*, vaster in extent than any Ocean of Water; and surveys nobler *Continents* in remote Orbs, at its departure, then the *widest* Tracts of Land that can be found upon this Globe of *Earth*. Nevertheless, 'tis hurried into them by an *unnatural* way of *Sin's* introducing.

An *Angel* (who is all over Spirit *from the beginning*) is a glorious being, without any thing of *Matter* in the frame of his *Person*; and would be ashamed of a *Body*, as a *Prince* would be of a *Fetter*, because it would debase a Creature *originally* made without any thing of Matter in his Substance. But the Soul of Man, stripp'd of his Body, looks very *awkwardly*; because *God put on* that body, and *Death pulls it off*: for this reason he can't appear destitute of his old Companion without a *Scar*, which is a Mark of God's displeasure upon him.

And, tho' truly the losing the Body, in it's present Condition, is in it self a being eased of a *burden*; yet, when we consider that all the *Diseases* and *Deformities* of our present Body are owing to *Sin*; and that

the

the loss of the Body afterwards is owing to it, as well as the loss of its *Original strength* and *beauty* at first: Death (which thus, as a Creature of *Sin*, removes the Souls of Men into the other World, without their Bodies) is justly branded with an Imputation of being *our Enemy*. For had Death never been inflicted upon our *Ancestors*, and upon us after them, we should have had Bodies *proper* to be join'd with *Innocent* and *Active* Souls, and our *organiz'd* Dust, as well as the Spirit of Man, had been translated into the other World, one as soon as the other; and both together had been agreeable Companions in their *Delightful* Travels into the Regions of *Eternity*.

'Tis true, by the *extraordinary Grace* and *merits* of our *Blessed Redeemer*, the separate Souls of *Penitent Believers* are in a solitary State of *Bliss*, after the Dissolution of their earthly Tabernacle, before it will be rebuilt at the General Resurrection. Nevertheless, Death deprives our Bodies of their share in the glories of God's Kingdom till the Resurrection. Thus far this Enemy defrauds and plunders us, even under a State of *transcendent Salvation*. Judge then, how formidable he must have been to us without the manifestation of such extraordinary Grace.

But,

But, tho' Death hath appeared to be an *Enemy* to God and Man, yet he was not the *first*: he is here call'd the *last* Enemy: which implys that there were others before him: now these were all the *Fall'n Angels*; one of which tempted our *first Parents* into Sin, and a breach of their *Allegiance* to their *Great and Gracious Creator*. These wag'd War against the *Holy Angels*, and aim'd at the diminution of the *Divine Majesty*: Perhaps they were foolish enough to endeavour not only the *eclipsing* his Glory, but the very *extinction* of his Being. Be that how it will, all *Atheists* are Sinners of this Class, and Enemies to God in the highest and most odious sense of the Character.

A *Second* Enemy older than *Death* is *Sin*: for as by one Man Sin entred into our World; so Death entred by Sin: and Sin is the very sting of Death: This is an *Inveterate* Enemy to God: 'Tis directly *opposite* to the *Holiness* of his *Nature*, and to the *Glory* of his *Majesty*: 'Tis a *violation* of all those *beautiful* and *reasonable* Laws, which he hath prescrib'd for the Rule and Guidance of the Conduct of his Creatures.

And as Sin affronts the *Almighty Creator*; so 'tis *injurious* to all *Created Beings*, who fall under the Power and Domi-
nion

nion of this *hideous Monster*, which is an Enemy to the whole *Universe*. To speak more *particularly* of the *Malignant* influence it has upon Creatures of our own *Class* and *Species*, it *deludes* our *Understandings*, and *enslaves* them to a *vain Imagination*. It promiseth great *Pleasure* and *Profit*; but it affords nothing, at the long run, besides *shame* to the *Face* and *vexation* to the *Heart*. It gives our *choosing faculty* a *wrong* and *perverse byass*, by making us averse to *solid Good* and *vertuous Exercises*; whilst, by a strange sort of *Sorcery*, it renders us *enamour'd* of *trifles* and *mean insignificant enjoyments*. It tarnisheth the *Beauty*, supplants the *Health* and diminisheth the *Strength* of the *Body*: It clouds the *Reason* and pampers the *Brutal* and *ignominious passions* of the *Mind*: It sets us at an *hostile* distance from *God*, and plungeth us into that *Friendship* with the vicious *Pleasures* and *Conversation* of the *World*, which, like *Pitch*, can't be so much as touch'd without defiling the persons who venture to make the *foul Experiment*. So happy are they who lay *St. Paul's* *Expostulation* to heart, *What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? Let not Sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the Lusts thereof.*

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The *fourth* thing to be done is to shew you, *how* Death will be destroyed, with a short Representation of the glorious consequences of his *Fall*. The *Death of Death* will be a great Event. *Death*, since the *Resurrection of Christ*, and the glorious Sun-shine of the *Gospel Dispensation*, hath been very much weakned, and become far less terrible to our view than he was, before the *Blessed Jesus* (with whom our Life is hid) triumph'd *openly* over this *Insolent Tyrant*. *Faith in Christ*, and the *Love of God* in the *Regenerate*, is *now* become stronger to *comfort* than *Death* can be to *terrifie* the *Faithful*.

But, tho' the Tyrant is weakned, and an hook is put into his nostrils, yet he still reigns with *Sin*, tho' not so *uncontroulably*, as in the Days of *Adam* and *Moses*. But there is a time foreknown by God, when *Time* and *Death* shall give up their last Gasps together; when he shall not only cease to *reign*, but be moreover *abolish'd* and even *cease to be*: Then will be fulfilled what was written by *Hosea* XIII. 14. *Death is swallow'd up in Victory*. 'Twill be a solemn *Funeral* indeed, and attended with a very pompous *Procession*, when the *Prince of Terrors* shall be *interr'd*, after he for some thousands of years *had eat the*
flesh

flesh of Kings, and the flesh of Captains, and the flesh of Mighty Men, and the flesh of Horses, and of them that sit on them; and the flesh of all Men; both bond and free; both small and great. Those vast *Receptacles*, in which Innumerable Millions of *Separate Souls* are lodg'd, will become destitute and without Inhabitants. *Whole Orbs* will be laid *desolate* by the huge disaster. All the spacious Divisions of the *Kingdom of Hades*, that belong'd to the *usurp'd* Dominions of this proud *Sultan* of the *Invisible Regions*, will be drain'd of all that inhabited them, after some of them had spent *an Age of Ages* in them.

And, as no Souls shall *thence-forward* any more depart trembling out of Bodies into *unknown* parts of the Universe; and sail over *an Ocean* in which before they did not know how to steer their course: So all those Souls who, from the *first* Man that died, down to the *last* that shall die, were forc'd from their Bodies, whether in *Infancy, Youth* or *Old Age*; whether in the way of *Nature*, or by the less usual strokes of *Fate*; in whatsoever *Country*; by *Sea* or by *Land*; or in whatsoever Age of the World; and under whatsoever *Dispensations* of *Light* and *Religion*; all these Souls, I say, shall reenter their new-rais'd

P Bodies,

Bodies, and be *transplanted* out of the Territories of *Hades* in numberless Colonies, into Regions proper for *embodied* Souls to subsist in: the *Wicked* into places adopted to *torment* them; and the *Righteous* into places proper to *irradiate* and *entertain* their *glorified Minds* and *Bodies*, in a state of *Indiscerpible Union*. Then will be the most transporting *Jubilee* of the *Saints*; and then will be the most *dolorific Consternation* in those who shall be found under a state of *Condemnation*. At that time will a *Monarch* fall, who, were he to die to-morrow, would have reign'd above 6000 years. Then those who shall be *chang'd* (that is, shall make as short a stay in the Kingdom of *Hades*, as the Souls of *Infants* that were no sooner tied to their Bodies, but they were torn from them, made in this inferiour Scene) shall be the *last Spectators* of this great *Catastrophe*, and caught up with their Lord, out of the *Gulph of Ghosts*, into Regions which will be always inhabited by the *same* persons, and will be fill'd and peopled by all at once. Then and there will they sing, O *Death*, where is thy *Sting*? O *Grave*, where is thy *Victory*? The *Sting of Death* is *Sin*; and the *Strength of Sin* is the *Law*; But, Thanks be to God, who giveth us the *Vi-*
ctory

Story thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.

It now lies upon my Promise, in the *last* place to shew, *whence it comes to pass* that Death will be the last Enemy that shall be destroy'd. The cause of this is very *obvious*, if we will but consider, that as long as *Sin* is in the World, *Death* must be in it too. *Death Eternal* will be always in the last World of *Desperates*, because the sinful persons of those *Desperates* will always remain in Being: In like manner *Death Temporal* cannot die, till *Sin Temporal* hath died, that is to say, till new Men, who have the liberty of Committing Sin, in a *State of Tryal*, cease to be brought into the World. *Birth* and *Generation* must have finish'd their Course, before *Death* can finish its course: For all being born and conceiv'd in *Sin* must as surely *die* as they are *born*: for one Generation goes whilst another comes; and the *last* Generation will come at last: The Close of the *Era* of Generation will compleat the Circle of Mortality; and the Sons and Daughters of Men shall then neither *Marry*, nor *Die* any more: All *Orbs* will have receiv'd the *full complement* of Inhabitants; and every *Species* of Creatures will have its adjusted and fore-ordain'd number of *Individual* partakers of the Nature peculiar to them. Till

then the Souls of Men must wait their appointed time with Faith and Patience for their *second* change, by reunion to their Bodies; as they, whilst in their Bodies here, did wait for their *first* great change, by a removal out of their *vile* Bodies: For before the said *prefix'd* time, this *Corruptible* will not put on *Incorruption*, nor will this *Mortal* sooner put on *Immortality*. Nevertheless, after a certain Period of Duration, we shall in new Bodies, join'd to *glorified* Souls, as certainly bear the Image of the *Heavenly*, as we now do bear the Image of the *Earthly Adam*.

This *marvellous* time will be a season of the Greatest *Horror*, or of the Greatest *Joy*: Of the greatest *Horror* to the *Impenitent* and *Unbelieving*: for then the *Lord Jesus* shall be reveal'd from Heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. Who shall be punish'd with everlasting destruction from the presence of the *Lord*, and from the Glory of his Power. But to the *Righteous* 'twill be a season of exceeding great *Joy*; for he will then come to be glorified in his *Saints*, and to be admired in all them that believe. For God will bring with him them that sleep in *Jesus*. Those of them which are
alive,

alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the *Archangel*, and with the Trump of God: and *the Dead in Christ* shall rise first, and be caught up together with those that remain, and are alive (after they have been suddenly and gloriously transform'd) in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air: And so shall they be ever with the Lord. Wherefore do ye who abound stedfastly in doing the work of the Lord; Comfort one another with these thoughts. O blessed be God, who hath from the beginning chosen us to Salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath lov'd us, and given us everlasting Consolation, and good hope through Grace, comfort our Hearts, and stablish us in every good Word and Work,*

SERMON XI.

A

CONTEMPLATION

On the DEATH of the

DUKE of BEDFORD.

THIS Essay is most humbly dedicated to the *venerable* Memory of the Honoured THOMAS MIDDLETON Esquire now *deceased*; who died a Worthy Representative of the County of *Essex* in *Parliament*; a *generous* Benefactor to the *unworthy* Writer of these Papers in his *Minority*.

ECCL.

ECCL. VII. 2.

The living will lay it to his Heart.

TH O' no *Calamity*, whilst it lasts, is *joyous* but *grievous*; yet all our Troubles in the *present* Scene have this *alleviation*, that a Wise Man, whatever his *own* or *friends* troubles be, can turn them to very considerable account. The state we are now in hath this advantage peculiar to it self, that our very *Troubles* may be improv'd to our *everlasting benefit*.

A *Vertuous* Man hardly finds greater pleasures in any earthly enjoyment, than in the Conversation of a Religious Friend, Relation, or Acquaintance; he must needs therefore be concerned and troubled at the loss of such a Friend: For tho' the Day of a *good* Man's *Death* is better than the Day of his *Birth* to himself; yet it can't be so to his *surviving* Friends, who would enjoy the support and refreshment of his presence and Company in their *Pilgrimage* here as long as they can.

And yet, as keen an Affliction as the

Death of a good Friend is to the *Wise* Men, *Solomon* has ventur'd to maintain, that it may be more *beneficial* to a Man to wait upon the *Funeral* of his *Friend*, than to visit him upon his *Birth-day*, when he is *Hail* and *Healthy*, and invites his Relations to a splendid Entertainment; and is congratulated for the addition of a new Year to his Life. *It is better to go to the House of Mourning than to the House of Feasting*; and that for two plain reasons: *For first, that is the end of all Men.* Hath his Death depriv'd us of a good Friend in this World? Why, this loss can only affect us in *this* World; and consequently cannot affect us long. Death hath put a Period to his time and continuance here amongst us: This Period might have been put to ours too before, or when his continuance here was ended. And tho' God hath not thought fit that we should be yet remov'd, there is a time allotted for our Removal by Death too: How soon it may come we know not: but we can judge from our observation of the Circuit of Years, which compleats the Period of the most longliv'd persons amongst us, that our Period of continuance here can't be at a very great Distance from the youngest of us. This is one reason of Comfort when we Con-

dole

dole the loss of our Friends. Our loss is but *Temporary*: But there is a greater Reason in *Solomon's* Judgment for our acquiescing in the Will of God, when he is pleas'd to deprive us of our Friend, by transplanting him into another State; and that is, its being an allaruming *Monitor* of our own frailty and Mortality to us: *And the Living will lay it to heart.*

Any *Memento* of *Mortality* may be useful, and make some impression upon us: we cannot hear of the Death of a Neighbour, and of one that we knew, but our fancy is struck with some *solemn* and *grave* Ideas. But if the Person, whose Death is related, were a *Rich* or a *Great* Person; one of *Figure*; one either eminently *Virtuous*, or notoriously *Vicious*; we are still so much the more affected, and the Impression dwells the longer with us: we can't then avoid naturally reflecting that, since the *Great* and the *Small* do die; since he that *honour-eth* and he who *desieth* his Maker; since he who *revereth* and he who *profaneth* an Oath doth alike die, all Men must unavoidably die; and therefore we our selves in our course. For the *Grave* requires *High* and *Low*; nay the *Virtuous* themselves: nor can the most *aspiring* Adventurers in Wickedness deliver them who are given to
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it from *Death*: The Death of a *Noble Peer* cut off very young, and so soon after he had a powerful sense of Religion and Contempt of the World: The Death of a Noble grown so *Devout* to God and *useful* to Men; The Death of one in the midst of *affluence*, and at the top of *Honours*, brought off from a vain course of Life to a *manly* and *serious* sense of a *future* State; and by the *Grace* of God treading in the steps of *Ancestors* famous for *Piety* and *Beneficence*. Such a Death, I say, as *this*, does not only glance upon the *Fancy* and surprise for a *minute*; It sinks *deep*; and if *any* Message of Death abides with us *this* will, and make us to meditate so upon Mortality as to promote the purification of our hearts by this exercise: This *the Living will surely lay to his heart*; consider of it *seriously, awakingly* and to the purpose.

This *Text* you see, as explain'd by the Context, plainly teaches us, that *Providence* expects from us a particular Improvement of the Death of our near Friends and Relations. The easing Nature by a shower of Grief for our loss that quickly evaporates, is not all the business that is then to be done by us. No: Our stricter *care* and *solicitude* to make our selves ready against the time, when we shall be Commanded to enter

ter Eternity, must be an evidence of such a behaviour, in these Circumstances, as God judges most becoming and beneficial for us in them: This is the *Heavenly* Art of Extracting *Life* and *Prosperity* to our own *Souls*, from the Corruption of the *bodies* of our Friends. The being made more *habitually* serious and earnest, in our pursuit of Eternal Happiness, by such *gloomy* dispensations of *Providence*, is a Noble sort of *severity* upon our selves; and a kind of *Divine* Revenge upon the *Grave*: for, at the long run, it furnisheth us with more Comfort than we could possibly lose, by the meer absence of the *Deceas'd Patriot*. This *improves* without *oppressing* and *preying* upon our Spirits. This is not to glut and choke our selves with *sullen* Grief and an *obstinate Melancholy*; as if we thought much to accept of, and to be thankful to God for other *numerous* Comforts of Life, only because we can't retain *one*, which God in his Infinite Wisdom thinks fit to withdraw from us: But 'tis to meet him in his ways, and to learn, by the loss of an *Earthly* and a *Mortal* Friend, to be fitting and preparing our selves for alliance to *Angels*, and the *entertaining Society* of *Innumerable* and *Immortal* Friends in Heaven. Grief merely for our present loss waists and
inju-

injures the *Living*, without any profit to the *Dead*. But when a *Reasonable* and *decent* sorrow, for the absence of a *Deceas'd* Friend, ends in an Holy Seriousness and a *resign'd severity of Spirit*; *Nature* is reliev'd by our very *sorrow*; our *Friend* is *respected*, and our *Minds* are *sanctified* and better'd by his *Death*. Our Grief by this means promotes our *most lasting Gain*; And if our *deceas'd* Friends truly lov'd us, and were so *sincerely* virtuous when they left us, as to be capable of rejoycing in the World they are now in; and *there* have any news of the welfare and prosperity of our *better* part, from those good Angels who watch over us for Good; there is no doubt, but that (since the Holy Angels rejoyce at the Conversion of a Sinner) *Holy separate Souls* are pleased, and gratified by the News of the improvement of their surviving Friends, in a Course of Grace and Holiness. For they know and see, with the greatest satisfaction, that *Holiness* in our *Temper* and *Conversation* is the only firm foundation of endless Joy, and Prosperity in the World of *Spirits* and *Souls*.

But tho' the more immediate scope of this *Text* seems to be, that the Death of our near Friends and Relations is one of those Dispensations of Providence, whereof God expects

expects a particular Improvement, by seriousness and retirement, employ'd in Religious Exercises to the eternal good of our Souls: Yet the *Remainder* of this *Contemplation* shall be laid out upon another thought: and that is this: If the Death of a Friend be judg'd by *Inspiration* to be a very moving *Monitor* of our own *Mortality*; and because 'tis so may be improv'd by serious consideration to our own advantage; then *Remoter* Monitors of our Mortality from *their*, or *our own* sickness, from an escape from some sudden and *dangerous* Accident, and the like, are proportionably in their kind proper to affect us with a sense of our *frailty*; and *improvable* by us to the *same* great purpose: Now the Consequence of this will be, that a *serious Consideration, and sense of our Mortality in General*, is a Considerable Instrument and means of an *holy life*: and therefore *Daily free Meditation* upon Death is an Exercise that is very serviceable to a Man, who would be an Holy Christian and sincerely Religious. And as this Truth is asserted by way of *Corollary* by this wise *Prince*; so also the *Penman* of the *ninetieth Psalm*, who, in all probability, was a *Prince* too, is express upon it. *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our hearts*
unto

unto Wisdom. To number our Days, is daily to remember how short our Continuance here is. And if we would do this, we should apply our hearts and full strength of endeavour to the true Wisdom of laying up treasure for Eternity. *Oh, faith Moses, Deut. xxxix. 29. that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would Consider their latter end!* what is it to understand and Consider our latter end? Is it only to be convinc'd that we shall die? No: 'Tis to meditate, and seriously too, upon Dying, till by thinking we know the consequences of Death; and are wrought upon by our remembrance of it, to prepare our selves by an holy life for it.

But this *Subject* ought to be discuss'd more *particularly*, since an *enlargement* upon it will make the rest of our *Contemplations* the more useful: Let us therefore, *first*, see how this Exercise is a *Considerable Instrument* of an *Holy Life*. 2^{ly}, Let us Cure our own *backwardness* to it, by shewing that it is neither a *Melancholy*, nor an *Ominous*, nor an *Impracticable* Exercise.

Now *frequent and serious Meditation upon Death* appears to be very *instrumental* to an *Holy Life*, because it trains up a Man's Mind to a due exercise of *Consideration*

tion in General. Mens Souls Die not so much for want of *Knowledge* as for want of *Consideration*. For the Cause of their want of any necessary Knowledge is not *incapacity*, but *inconsiderateness*. A little *Divine Knowledge*, well digested by *Considering*, is of *great force*, and has very *salutary efficacy* upon the Soul: For *Holy Truth* throughly consider'd is not a bare furniture of the Understanding; but descends into the *Heart*, and *sanctifies the affections*; so that all the powers of the *inner Man* are benefitted and better'd by it. Whatsoever therefore promotes *Consideration* is instrumental to an *Holy Life*: Now the want of *Consideration* is owing to the want of *Seriousness*: Whatsoever therefore promotes *Seriousness* promotes *Consideration*. Now *Seriousness* is promoted by *Adversity*. In the *Day of Adversity* saith *Solomon*, *Consider*. Thus *Joseph's Brethren*, when imprison'd, recollected themselves, and said, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his Soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this Distress come upon us*. Now, tho' there is greater plenty of *Adversity* than of *Prosperity* dispens'd by the hand of God among men; because their carelessness makes *Adversity*
more

more seasonable for *most* People than Prosperity can be: Yet, in lieu of a *Constant* Adversity; and to prevent the necessity of Adversity if we are in prosperity; or if we are already in Adversity, to prevent the necessity of a *greater* Adversity than what we are at present under, in order to make us staunch and serious, we should daily place *the Image of Death* before us: for this is a Subject (if any will do it) that must make us *Serious* and *Considerate*, when we fix our thoughts upon it. For we know the *change* will be very great that Death will work upon us, whenever it comes; be it how it will with us at that time: and come we know it will: and if we should not be prepar'd for it, we know that it will be the *forest* Adversity that ever befell us, being the Inlet of *everlasting* Misery into our *Souls*. Now the daily practise of Meditation upon such a change (which must be our lot *sooner* or *later*) can't but fix our Minds. And those who complain that they can't fix their *Attention* at their *Prayers*, nor settle it to a *Sermon*, would do well to learn to think *fixedly* upon *grave* and *divine* Subjects, by thinking much upon *Death*: for if any subject can train up their thoughts to an Habit of *fix'd Consideration*, a subject that so nearly concerns us as this, and
which

which is so *severe* in its Nature, must have force enough upon our Minds to bring them to it.

But *Meditation upon Death* appears to be instrumental to an Holy Life; not only as it promotes *Consideration in General*: but also as it is most likely to engage a Man in a *profound* thoughtfulness upon *Things*, and *Truths* and *Interests* of the greatest Value and Consequence. That this Reason may appear in its native Evidence, you must remember that I am speaking of a *Chosen* Meditation upon Death; not of a sudden stumble of the *fancy* upon it, started by the sudden Relation of the Death of this or that Person; which goes out of the Mind as fast as it comes in: For this is not like to end in any thing more than an, *Who would have thought it? I am sorry to hear it*; or a flight, *We must all go after him*; or some *short* saying somewhat like it. But who so *often* and *diligently* thinks on Death: He that makes choice of it for his Subject will take notice of the *properties* of it; and lifting up his Mind to God to be assisted in his *Meditation*; he will meditate upon it with an Heart prepar'd and fitly dispos'd. Such an one can't well avoid observing *thus much* about it.

Death is either a *Man's* intirely ceasing to remain in Being, or it is not: That it

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is not *a ceasing to remain in Being* is evident: for tho' the *Body* ceaseth to Live; yet even *that* is not immediately resolv'd into scatter'd particles of Dust, nor is it ever reduc'd into nothing. Well then, since the very *Body* doth not loose its *Being* with its *Life*; Why should we suspect that part which just before was *quickning* the *Body*; which *reason'd* and *spoke*; and often at *the last failure* of the *Body* thinks and speaks *above it self*, from and in the *Body*, is reduc'd into nothing, or do's become a few wandring particles of *Air* and *Smoke*? I could not indeed see it go out of the *Body*: However, that is no just Argument against its *distinct* Being from the *Body*, or its continuance in Being after the *Dissolution* of the *Body*; because whilst 'twas in the *Body*, and did *inform* and *actuate* the *Body*, my Eye could not see it; it being contrary to, and beneath its Nature to be Visible to Gross Organs of *corporeal* sight.

Wherefore since the *Soul* doth not *die* with the *Body*, 'tis clear that at Death the *Soul* passeth into *another State*: And tho' we cannot understand so much of the *Nature* and *properties* of a *separate Soul* as we know of our present *Life*: Yet we know that every Being, which is *Conscious* of its own *Existence* and *Operations*, is
either

either in a State of *Ease* or *Uneasiness*; of *Misery*, or *Satisfaction*. The Soul then since it lives after the Body, and is *Conscious* of its own existence and operations, must be in one of these two States. Now, how shall we know whether of these two States is allotted for *Souls Deceas'd*? Can we suppose that they are *all alike* Miserable, or satisfied in an *After-state*, without any regard to their *different* demeanour here? That is not to be allow'd of by a *Considerate* Mind: For if they are all alike miserable, then God made all Souls only to remove them into a *Miserable* State, after they had been *imperfectly* Easy and *imperfectly* Miserable, in the different parts of their Life, in a *former* State, tho' their behaviour in that State had been widely different. This is *inconsistent* with God's *Goodness*: He can't create all Souls purely in order to a *final* and *unalterable* State of Misery. Shall we on the other hand conclude all Souls *alike Happy*, when they are entred into the other State: Not so neither: for, since in our *first* estate he *arbitrarily* places different Souls in different circumstances, more or less *advantageous* or *disadvantageous*, wherein (not having been in a *foregoing* State) they are incapable of *Rewards* and *Punishments* for their behaviour; we have no reason to think

that all shall be treated *alike* in the next State, wherein they will be capable of Rewards and Punishments for their behaviour in a *former*. On the contrary, the difference of the Circumstance in which they are arbitrarily plac'd by God here, may reasonably be conceiv'd to be adjusted in another State: because there they will not be plac'd in an *easy* or an *uneasy* State by *Arbitrary* Rules; but according to their *observance* or *neglect* of those *Laws* of behaviour, which God prescrib'd to Souls in *this* State. And since this appears most reasonable to be believ'd about God's disposal of Souls in an After-state; the *Conclusion* we must settle upon will be, that *the different behaviour of Souls in this Life, and the Vast difference there is between the tempers and dispositions of different Souls, when they leave this World and the Body, declares that different Souls, when they enter the other World, do enter a State as widely different as their temper.*

Now the *States* of Souls, which are as *Widely different* as the *Holiness* of Holy Souls and the *Wickedness* of Souls that are undutiful to their Maker, are a *State of Misery* and a *State of Satisfaction*. And we have notice of *two such States of Souls after Death*, in the *lesser uneasiness* of
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Wicked Souls on Earth; and in the *imperfecter satisfaction* of Souls who are as holy here, as they can be in *these* Bodies.

Now since the State of all Souls is not by an *arbitrary* Goodness *alike* Happy in the other World, nor by an *arbitrary severity* *alike* miserable, but some there are miserable and others satisfied; Reason obligeth us next to inquire, *what behaviour here* is the Cause of Mens being thus differently dispos'd of in an *After-state*. Now that is quickly discern'd by considering, that there are certain tempers of Mind and certain actions (as for instance, *Uncleanness, Drunkenness, Malice, Envy, Gluttony, Blasphemy, Implacableness, Wrath, Injustice* and the like) which draw after them an uneasiness within the Mind (when serious and Considerate) tho' the *Body* be gratified by these actions sometimes; and tho' the Man be Wicked *alone* or with *Combinations* of *Criminals* of the same kind. And further, there are certain tempers and actions of an opposite Nature (as for instance, *Charity, Candour, Humility, Meekness, submission to the Will of Providence, sobriety, and such like*) which are attended with a still but delightful sensation of Mind, tho' discern'd only by the Mind; and *sense* is often denied; and the Ridicule of unrea-

sonable inconsiderate men is often dispens'd with, whilst we are exercis'd in these Virtues.

This particular, being well consider'd, cannot prove less than that the mind is capable of a distinct prosperity of its own subsisting without a body, and far remote from all the enchantments of an *Earthly Life*; forasmuch as it is capable of Pleasures peculiar to it self, for which it hath no dependence upon its relation to the Body. Why then should not a Considerate Man depend upon it as a proper Conviction; that certain tempers and actions which are branded with uneasiness of Mind (tho' *Sense*, and *Princes*, and *Multitude* under the hurry of *Luxury*, *Imagination* and *Thoughtlessness*, are delighted with them) are, by the notice of this secret intelligence from God, the foundation of the Adversity and Misery of a Soul in another World; and that the *contrary* tempers and sorts of Demeanour, which please the *inmost* and *sedatest* *Reflections* of the Mind (at the same time that sense is Crucified, and Great Men and Multitude do discourage such behaviour) are the foundation of the distinct prosperity and flourishing Condition of a Soul in an After-state? Do not these pleasant pledges of Favour, from the hand of
Provi-

Providence, discover the satisfaction of *Holy Spirits* there?

Thus you see how *Voluntary Daily Meditation upon Death* teacheth a *Judgment to come*, and an *After-state of Rewards and Punishments*; in what lively colours it paints the *Immortality of the Soul*, and, from our *moral Taste of Good and Evil*, shews us the difference of *Holiness and Wickedness*; the necessity of *Holy Mens Perseverance* in a course of *Holiness* till *Death*; and of *Wicked Mens Repentance* and becoming *Holy* before *Death*: Now certainly to think on such subjects, being to think on those *Truths* by which the *Soul* must *live* and be judg'd: since thus to Meditate is to be plotting and contriving for the interests and preferments of an *Eternity*, it must be granted, that serious Meditations upon *Death*, engageth us in the Consideration of *Things*, and *Truths*, and *Interests* of the *greatest* Importance. Since moreover this product of the *natural reasonings* of a *Man's own Mind* is back'd with a *Revelation*, which hath all the Characters of a *Divine Book*, convey'd from the *God of Heaven* to us, that can justly be expected; which speaketh of an *Heaven* and an *Hell*, and a *Judgment to come*, with all imaginable plainness; which strength-

neth our Faith, by the most *ample promises* of *eternal Glory, and Happiness* to the *Holy* and the *Penitent*; and threatneth, with the most *solemn denunciations*, eternal *vengeance* and misery against the *impetuously* Wicked; we must be mighty fond of our *Irregular* Lusts and Passions; and of a *brutal* suspicion, that our *Souls* may be as *Mortal* as our *Bodies*; if this Evidence to the Contrary will not suffice to satisfy us in a State of *Trial* and *Faith*: And a *fearful* *Condemnation* certainly awaits our *Infidelity*, if we are so *unreasonable*, as not to be convinc'd by the Light that thus surrounds us.

If any one should offer to cavil at the practise of Daily Meditations upon Death, they can use no other pretence that I can think of, but that, either first, it is too *melancholy* to be daily: or 2^{dly}, that it is *impracticable*: or 3^{dly}, that 'tis *ominous*: or 4^{thly}, *needless*.

But *first*, this exercise is not *necessarily* *Melancholy*, unless to be *serene* and *serious* unavoidably implies that passion in it; and no Men are truly chearful and pleas'd except the *riotous* and the *jovial*. Nothing but *Guilt unrepented of*, and the Indulgence of unlawful Lusts and Passions, can make it so to us. Now if the case be thus with

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us, we have reason to be Melancholy till we have meditated *long* enough and *powerfully* enough upon Death, to deliver our selves from such a *dangerous* estate. But if *to repent* be to be Melancholy; if not to be strolling on *unconcernedly* in the high road of *Destruction* be to be Melancholy; 'tis an *wholesome* and *necessary* Melancholy; a blessed Melancholy that plucks us as Firebrands out of the Suburbs of *Hell*. This is as necessary for us as a *bitter* Draught for a *foul* stomach. And when our *Conscience* has been soundly purg'd by this means, 'tis no longer a melancholy practise: It bars us of no necessary innocent pleasures, it doth not hang, like a *Dionysius's* Sword, over the heads of any persons, but of bold and impatient Sinners. On the contrary, Death is a pleasant subject to a Mind prepar'd for it, by the Discipline of Meditation upon it; and is a preservative against *untawful* Pleasures, which end in *Wormwood* and *Gall*: And indeed if to be without the pollutions of Sin is in some Mens *Dialect* to be Melancholy, who know none but the *swinish* pleasures of the *Incontinent* and *Intemperate*, this is a *necessary* sort of Melancholy for us, who would go to Heaven, and would not, with *Profane Esau*, sell an everlasting Birth-right for a Mess of Portage.

rage. Men, who make such *groundless* exceptions against a frequent remembrance of our latter end, are not acquainted with the *lasting* Pleasures, which take their rise from our *Consciousness* of our being *meek*, and *humble* and *chast*; and in short of the practice of any kind of Virtue. Is it no Pleasure to smile *at* the thoughts of Death? to see no Hand-writing of Terror against us upon that thin Wall, which parts the Worlds of *Time* and *Eternity*, to make our Countenance pale, and our Joints tremble and knock together? The loud Laughter of the Thoughtless and Profane, is like the crackling of the Thorns; a blaze with a stench at the end of it: But the pleasures of Virtue are still and Constant, and always at Command, without dependence upon *Time*, and *Place*, and *Company*, and *Circumstances*; and the longer they last, the better they please.

As Daily Meditations upon Death is not necessarily Melancholy; so it is not *impracticable*: no more than *Repentance* is to the *Guilty*, or the prospect of Ease and Joy to the Spirits of the *Penitent* and *Regenerate*. These can every Day think of Death, without being *sullen* and morose in Company; or refusing *animal* Refreshments, or such innocent *Diversions* as are necessarily

necessarily for the *Body*. Death is not an *Executioner* in their Apprehension, his Message is no Dead-warrant to them. Besides the daily setting of the Sun, and our reposing of our selves to sleep every Evening; but above all, the holy Custom of having a Death's Head in our Closet is a sufficient daily *Emblem*, *Motto* and *Monitor* of this Christian and useful Exercise.

In the *third* place it ought to be Consider'd, that this practise is not *ominous*: for as our not thinking of Death doth not *prolong* our lives; so our thinking upon it need not *shorten* them; for the Period assign'd by God to our Continuance here is either *alterable* or *unalterable*: If it be *unalterable*, neither this exercise nor any thing else can *shorten* or *prolong* Life. If it be *alterable*, *Virtue* is most likely to induce God to lengthen it; and *Vice* is most likely to provoke him to shorten it: Now since this exercise is a mortal enemy to *Vice*; and so effectual an instrument of *sincere* and *universal Holiness*, it rather tends to prolong than to shorten our lives; and consequently an habit of thinking upon our Mortality need not forebode or hasten our Death: We may heal our Souls by thinking upon Death, without being necessary to the *Murder* of our Bodies, unless the depriving it of a *super-*

perfluous Mass of Flesh, which makes the Body more *easy* and *portable* to it self, and less cumbersome to the mind whereby it is actuated; and the rendring the Stream and Current of the Blood and Spirits more clear and brisk, can have such a *charge* justly brought against it.

In the *last* place, let it be Consider'd that this exercise is not *needless*: for what with *avocations* and the cares of our Worldly Callings; what with necessary refreshments and with the suggestions of the Devil, *Good Men* find all helps few enough to keep their minds intent upon their *great home*; to escape the Temptations that are in the World through *Lust*; and to secure their nearest approaches to the *Purity* of Innocence and an *inoffensive* Life. Since therefore this exercise amongst others is so excellent a promoter of Holy Living, and of dying comfortable, why should it be Omitted?

Be we therefore, by what our thinking hath discover'd to us at length, persuaded to the daily use of this practise, we must all shortly die: Why then should we not think of it beforehand, that we may not be surpris'd in an Unpreparedness for it? If we take the advice of the *Holy Scriptures*, and of the *Ministers* of God in time; we shall not be condemn'd by the *former*, nor need

need to send for the *latter* upon a Death-bed. A *Death-bed* makes Men serious; why should not the Remembrance of it make them so too? Sure they who can be hardy enough to talk Profanely at the *Funeral* of a dead Friend, and with a *Corps* before their Eyes; or to be then drunk and to drown their Reason and Conscience in floods of Intemperance, must be cur'd of their Frenzy by an *extraordinary* operation of Grace.

If we thought frequently of a *Judgment* to come how *devout* should we be. Think every Day seriously upon Death, and I will be bold to say, ye cannot but be Holy in your proportion, as God is Holy. Would the *Unclean Man*, the *Whore-master* and *Adulterer* think thus of Death, he could not relish his impure embraces; nor the *Unjust Defrauder* his Oppression and Deceit: nor the *Drunkard* his bewitching Glass: nor the *Idle Man* his Sloth and waste of Time and abuse of Talents: nor the Malicious Person his Envy and Spiteful Temper: nor the *Perjur'd* and *Common Swearer* his profane taking of God's *Tremendous* Name in vain: nor the *Haughty Scornor* his Pride and Vanity: nor the *Revengeful Fury* his Turbulence and Implacableness: nor the *Liar* his dexterity in Tricking: Nor the *Irreverent Worshipper* his

his Indevotion: nor the *Hypocrite* his Dissimulation with God and Man: nor the *Wrathful* Man his Hastiness of Spirit: nor the *Discontented Repiner* his Murmuring and Impatience: nor the *Ambitious Aspirer* his lofty Schemes: nor the *Worldly-minded Miser* his Dotage upon bright Clay, confin'd to Chests and Scrutores: nor the *Slanderer* his Backbiting and Censoriousness: nor the *Inhospitable Nabal* his Churlish and Uncivil Behaviour: nor the *Sabbath-breaker* his Profanation of God's Holy-Day.

Were we aw'd, by a *Constant expectation of our Removal into another World*, we should not be decking and pampering these Bodies, which must rot in the grave, whilst our Souls are in a filthy condition with nothing but Rags and Tatters to cover them, and are perfectly famish'd and starv'd thro' neglect. But we should be curious in adorning our Souls with all Commendable Graces. *Devotion, Charity, Meekness*, and other *Heavenly Dispositions*, would shine as so many *Pearls and Diamonds* upon them: In short, we should carry our selves in all Relations and Capacities, whether *Parents or Children; Masters or Servants; Magistrates or Inferior*, so as that we may be welcom'd by Angels, and Holy Souls, when we shall pass from these bodies into that World which is as yet *Unknown* to us.

SERMON XII

PREACH'D before the
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

On the FEAST of

St. BARTHOLOMEW.

ECCL. XI+8.

*Remember the days of Dark-
ness: For they shall be many.—*

DAYS of *Darkness*, in the Style of the *Inspir'd*, denote several things: sometimes this expression signifies *a State of Trouble*.

Sometimes 'tis the Character of *old Age*: elsewhere it represents *the deplorable Condition of the worst and most ignorant part of Mankind, in the great affair of Religion*: But oftentimes it is used in none of these senses; but signifies, as it doth here, *the State of the Souls of Men, when stript of bodies, in which they remain*
from

his Indevotion: nor the *Hypocrite* his Diffimulation with God and Man: nor the *Wrathful* Man his Hastiness of Spirit: nor the *Discontented Repiner* his Murmuring and Impatience: nor the *Ambitious Aspirer* his lofty Schemes: nor the *Worldly-minded Miser* his Dotage upon bright Clay, confin'd to Chests and Scrutores: nor the *Slanderer* his Backbiting and Censoriousness: nor the *Inhospitable Nabal* his Churlish and Uncivil Behaviour: nor the *Sabbath-breaker* his Profanation of God's Holy-Day.

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from the time of the Death of their Bodies till the General Resurrection: Thus our Blessed Lord himself calls it, the night in which no man can work.

We may be said to *remember* this State, when we think so *seriously* and *devoutly* upon it, as to fit and prepare our selves for it. Those Days of Darkness, in the time of *Solomon*, were said to be *many*, because all that liv'd here in his time have since that time liv'd much longer in another World, and in another way of subsisting than they did in that World to which we still belong.

Nay not only *Solomon's Contemporaries* and *Predecessors*; but all his *Successors*, who *have* liv'd and *shall* live in any Age, except the *last before the Resurrection* do live much longer in the *separate State* than either our *Ancestors* did, or our *Contemporaries* do, or our *Posterity* shall live in a state of Union to these *earthly* Bodies.

Besides, it deserv's to be considerd that their Days, whose Days are fewest in the *Separate State*, may justly be said to be many: because their *Eternal State* is then begun; since the Souls of Men keep the Temper and Complexion with which they enter that World, throughout the whole boundless extent of their *Eternity*: Their
Way

Way of subsisting hereafter in *Immortal* Bodies may differ as much from their way of living in the separate State; as Souls in the separate State do vary from their former way of Living in Union to Earthly Bodies of Tryal. But the Character of all Souls after Death is *indelible*: They may be improving in Bliss till after the Resurrection; or they may till then contract more Guilt or Misery: Nevertheless the *Original* Quality of Souls, at their entrance into that State, can't be alter'd from Bliss to Misery; or from Misery to Bliss; so that in the consequences of that State it appears to be *eternal*; and of equal consequence, as to the original Quality of Souls, at their entrance of it with that State, which is to commence at the General Resurrection: for as our *Duration* in the State of the Resurrection will last for ever; so the Character which we shall bear *first* and *last*, in the separate State, will remain at and after the Resurrection, and determines the Eternity of our *Bliss* and *Woe*.

In discoursing upon this subject I shall
1st Guard this Character of the separate State from wrong inferences, which Libertines do draw from it; by shewing what it denotes, and what it doth not denote: and 2dly, Direct you how to remember the

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Days

Days of Darkneſs, ſo as to be for ever the better for your timely remembrance of them.

In order to guard this Character of the *ſeparate State* from the *wrong imputations*, which *loose and vicious* Perſons are too apt to throw upon it; I will ſhew *why*, and in *what Senſe*, the *ſeparate State* is ſtil'd a *Season of Darkneſs*.

The *Night* being made for *Reſt* and not for *Labour*: for the *refreshment* of thoſe who are weary with working well, and not for *doing their work*; the *ſeparate State* of Souls may be call'd their *Night*; becauſe their time of *Tryal* and preparatory working for *Eternity* expires at their entrance into the *State of Deceas'd* perſons: The *Night* cometh in which no Man can work, in a *State of Soul* united to a *Body*; and with the *perfect and compleat* Nature of a Man; the *Soul* being but *half* (tho' the *Superior* part) of our Nature. For tho' *Souls* after the *Death* of the *Body*, do ſtill work with operations peculiar to themſelves, ſince they are active then in the ground-work of their own Nature; yet they can't prepare for the glories of the *Reſurrection*, without all the powers and parts of that Nature which is to be glorified in the *State of the Reſurrection*: *There is no Man that*
bath

hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit: Men can't *then* overcome their Lusts and Passions who did not overcome them before. They have not power to do all this in the Day of Death. The Grave cannot praise God: Death cannot celebrate him.

They that employ'd all their *United* powers in God's Service, whilst they were Masters of Bodies, are acceptable in their oblation of the homage and services of those *fewer* powers which do remain, and are competent to the Soul in a State of separation from the Body: But they who would not give glory to the Lord their God in this Life, before he cause the darkness of Death to overtake them, with the intire and conjoint powers of *Soul* and *Body*, by works of *Devotion* towards God and works of *Goodness* to Men, and by the practise of that strict *self-denyal*, which is necessary to deliver their *own persons* from the tyranny of pernicious Courses and Customs; and to furnish the Mind with those Tempers that support Peace of Conscience here, and to train them up for the relish of Divine Joys, and the fruition of the Heavenly Society above, do begin too late to do all this, when their Souls are launching out into the Kingdoms of the Air, and the tremendous Gulf of Eternity.

The Sun of Grace is set quite to those Souls who would not work by the Light of it, whilst it shone upon their *Embodied Minds*. The sacrifices of separate Souls who glorified God by *Innocence*, or by *timely Repentance* in a State of Command over Bodies, are grateful incense to Almighty God: supposing that their sacrifices could consist of nothing but pious wishes to do more good works, and complacency in the review of those which they have formerly done. But a broken and Contrite Spirit, which would not glorifie God by Contrition before it was discharg'd from all Conflicts with the Body, is a Sacrifice which God will despise; since the sincerity of Souls of the *Humane* order cannot be perfectly tried, when the time allotted for its Conduct in a State of Tryal is expir'd.

The State of the *Resurrection* must answer the State of our Tryal in *Punishment*, or *Glory*, proportionably to the Powers of Mind and Body, which have been well employ'd in the Service of God, or have been abus'd in fulfilling the desires of the *Flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil*. Hence it is that God in *Scripture* calls the Soul *Heart*, so much oftner than he calls it *Mind* or *Spirit*; and by the Wisdom of *Solomon* in particular he hath laid down this Precept: *My*
Son

Son, give me thy Heart: that is, Do thou, O man, offer me the affections and the service of thy Mind, whilst it animates a Body, and has at least a shew of an arbitrary dependence in many of its operations upon the good, or ill State of a Body, the Life whereof is first perfected and latest lost in the Heart. 'Tis in the Heart with those *Spirits* which flow into it and reflow from it; and the different *agitations* thereof, according to the different *predominant* Tempers of the Mind, and the *diversified proportions* of the said different Tempers, that the Union of the Soul to the Body seems to be seated. Nay the *good* or *ill* State of the *blood*, and *humours* of the Body, do very closely affect the *Immediate* State of the Mind; tho' not with such *forcible* and *imperious* impressions, as the *settled peace* or *Raging disquiet* and *perturbations* of the *Mind* do make upon the *Crisis* of the Spirit and humours of the *Body*. This Reciprocal reaction of one upon the other is not grounded upon any native relation of the Principles of Mind and Matter to each other; but upon an *arbitrary* Decree of Almighty God; and in some intervals of the Souls Duration is suspended and broken off, and in others restor'd at pleasure. Nevertheless, as arbitrary as this mutual rela-

tion of theirs is, it seems essential to that first Frame of Humane Nature whereto the last and perfectest State of Rewards and Punishments must be *Confirm'd* and *Commensurate*: For it begins with the existence of the Minds and Bodies of Men; our Minds having been in no State of Life before Bodies perfectly *organiz'd* were prepar'd for them: And our Bodies were no sooner perfectly *organiz'd*, but a Mind was assign'd them that was endued with improvable powers of its *own*, growing more and more capable of governing the Mortal part thro'out the *successive* Stages of the improving Life and strength of the Body. In proportion to the said power God will proceed in the measures of his Future Judgment of *Humane Minds*: in proportion to the *good* use of it they will be *rewarded*; and in proportion to their *ill* use of it they will be *condemn'd*. And the *final good*, or *ill* use of the said power, establisheth the Character of *Virtuous* or *Vicious* in the Soul. The separate State doth but confirm, and perhaps withall improve the Temper and Character whereof it finds it possess'd. It may change the *Degree*, but will not alter the *Qualities* of it.

But 2dly, The Interval of the Soul's Duration, between the *Death* and *Resurrecti-*

on of our Bodies, may be call'd a *Day of Darknefs* in two more respects: for in *one Sense*, it is a Day of Darknefs to *us*, because of our *imperfect Knowledge* of *that State*; and in *another Sense*, it is a Day of Darknefs to *Souls Deceas'd*; because it takes away from them all immediate and direct Knowledge of what occurs in that *lower World* which they have left.

First, I say, it is a Day of Darknefs to *us*, because of our imperfect Knowledge of that State. 'Tis without doubt our own fault if we are not fully perswaded of the *certainty* of a *Future State*; or do in the least doubt that the Souls of our Deceas'd Friends (tho' dead to us) are more alive to God and themselves than before: for if *Reason* were defective in furnishing us with sufficient grounds for the belief of the Soul's *Immortality*, which whoever reads *Cyrus's* dying Speech in *Xenophon*, or the Speeches of *Socrates* to his Adversaries in *Plato* can hardly suspect; for granting those Speeches to be meer *fiction*; yet the Composers of them ow'd the Contents of them to their wise *Cultivation of Natural Light*: I say, supposing *Reason* could be defective in this particular; we have a *Divine Revelation* confirm'd by *Miracles*, and a Series of *Prophecies* fulfill'd at a great distance of time,

and in an extent descending to the *minutest particulars*; which ascertains us of the *vital subsistence* of Souls immediately after Death; this speaks of *Dives* in Torments, and of *Lazarus* in a State of Bliss, before the Resurrection: This calls the absence of good Mens Souls from Bodies, a State of more refreshing presence with the Lord, to the Spirits of the Just made perfect.

But, tho' we may be as fully satisfied of the *Reality* of that State, as we can be of any thing that is *future*, and are *unreasonable* if we demand *better Evidence* of it than what we already have; since it is as *Competent*, as our present State will admit, and is sufficient for all those purposes which made the *foreknowledge* of such a State necessary for us: Yet, *here* we walk by *Faith* and not by *Sight*: still it remains *future*, and can't be a *present* State to us: For this reason we can't have such *experimental Knowledge* and *animated Ideas* of that World as those who are already in it, and as we our selves have of the *present*: And tho' that World, and the enjoyments of it by a *just* Set of *Reflections*, may be made as *present* to us, as any thing *future* possibly can: yet our being us'd to *Bodies*, ever since we knew *Thought* and *Being*, makes us as much at a loss to conceive how

Souls

Souls should act without *Bodies*, and without having any *material* objects for *Instruments* and *occasions* of *Ideas* to our *Minds*; as we should be at a loss to conceive how *Souls* should actuate *Bodies*, and depend upon them for many *Ideas*, supposing our *present* State of Being had been a subsistence of *Pure Mind* (like the subsistence of the *Great God*, before the existence of any *Creature*) without any *Body* to *terminate* or *affect* its *operations*; and had receiv'd all its present *Ideas* from the *Immediate bounty* of its *Maker*, without the least *knowledge* or *intervention* of any *matter* at all: the *Possibility* hereof will easily be granted, by any one who considers what a want of *affinity* there is in Nature, between many *Ideas* and those *corporeal Objects*, which by impressions made upon the *Eye* and the *Ear*, and other *Organs* of the *Body*, do usually prove the *Immediate occasion* of such *Ideas*, as *Beauty* and *Musick* do imply in them, together with those *forcible sensations* which for the most part do of course attend them: * I say, had we been us'd to

* What Father *Malebranche* took so much to beat into his *Readers* was plainly *asserted*, and well expressed in one of the *Dissertations* of *Maximus Tyrinus* *ὁς οὐκ ὁρᾷ οὐκ ἀκούει*. 'Tis not the *Eye* that *sees* nor the *Ear* that *hears*; but the *Mind* is that which doth both *see* and *hear*.

such *Ideas*, without the mediation of any *corporeal Objects*, (the *possibility* whereof is evident from the existence of a *God*, before any *material* substance was created, for his *Ideas* of them were before their *existence*) we should have been at a loss to conceive, had we been told beforehand of a *future State* in *Union with Bodies*, how *Bodies* could occasion *Ideas* to our *Minds*. For whatever is perfectly *new*, and hath been perfectly *untry'd* by us, must be so far at least *obscure* to us. Thus our not having *experimented* what it is to *see* without *Eyes*, to *hear* without *Ears*; and to have other *Ideas*, whereof the *Organs* of the *Body* are usually the *occasions* and *conveyances* under *God*, hides many circumstances of the subsistence of separate *Souls* in *impenetrable* Darkness from us. But where is the wonder of all this? If we consider that we can't be in *two Worlds* at once, in the same *Sense* and *Extent* as we are *present* in this: nor can *two different* Worlds be *both* of them the *First* of those Worlds, to any order of Beings that are made to live in more than one. 'Tis but natural to think that such Creatures act more imperfectly in a *first* than in a *second*; and in a *second* than they will in a *third* State of *Souls*; and that in a *latter* World *Souls* may be endued with
facul-

faculties, and enrich'd with *Ideas* with which they were not acquainted in a *former*. Minds that have been Inhabitants of *two* Worlds must know much more than they do who have inhabited but *one*, and still remain Inhabitants of that *only* World.

Thus the Soul of Man, tho' it enters the *first* World very bare of *Ideas*, and is confin'd to the Organs of the Body in its *first* reception, and its *successive* enlargement and *refinement* of them, may nevertheless enter the *next* World with a considerable Stock of *Ideas*; because the Memory there is Stock'd with the experience of a *past* World; and receives a *gratuitous* addition of new Senses and of greater knowledge, without the toil of *artificial* and far-fetch'd thinking, which 'tis forc'd to apply for its improvement of the narrow and few *Ideas* which are given us in this *present* World.

Memory and *Indignation*, which are faculties now despised by us, because common to us, give us lively hints of the possibility of *Thought* without *Labour*; and of *Ideas* without any *material* Objects to excite them. In *Dreams* the Soul of Man, whilst the Organs of *external* Sense are lock'd up in the Dungeons of profound *sleep* and *inactivity*, hath a lively *type* and *plan* of the
invi-

invisible Scene and Theatre of the deceas'd, in their State of *disunion* from Bodies. Tho' in Multitude of Dreams there is a Great deal of Vanity, yet the *faculty of dreaming* is of *Divine* Institution. The *Visions* of the retir'd Soul, in the exercise of this Faculty, do suggest to it affecting presages of the Souls intended subsistence *out of Bodies*; and in some *faint* degree and resemblance it foresees how it may be all over *Eye* and *Ear* to it self, when it erects more magnificent Structures than ever the Eye presented to its View; and without its assistance can enjoy within it self the sight of Worlds, which want neither *Sun* nor *Moon*; neither *Hill* nor *Dale*, neither *Land* nor *Sea*; and by the power of *self-grounded Ideas* becomes all things to it self.

By this means, some Sinners have stood before the final *Tribunal* of the *Blessed Jesus* beforehand; and others have receiv'd the *Congratulations* of *Angels*, for their safe arrival into a *Paradise*, too glorious for the Eye to furnish them with it: because in that case we often conceive, far above the power of our passions and Senses whilst we are *awake*.

Wherefore let not our Eye be evil because God's hath been good to us. Let not our unavoidable ignorance of several particulars
of

of a Future State tempt us, without reason to question the certainty of there being such a State. When we were *Children* we could see *Mathematical Diagrams*, as well as the *adultest Proficients* in *Geometry*, tho' we could not learn from them how to erect Magnificent Temples and spacious Palaces; nor how to fortifie *weak* Towns, or to take *strong* ones. In like manner the faculties of our Souls, in their present Infancy, can see the *Heavenly Canaan* plainly, in General at a distance, as they are travelling to it, tho' they have not so distinct a View of it, as to be able to tell the *Topography* and the several neighbourhoods of this *delightful* Country.

Since then God hath design'd us a course of *Immortality* after this State, as well as a course of *Changes* and *Mortality* in it; let us be thankful for this intended favour; and, with a holy serenity and resignation of Mind receive his blessings, in that Order of succession in which God is pleas'd to bestow them upon us. If nothing, besides our actual being in the next World, will convince us of this truth, nothing but the being struck dead upon the spot can *conquer* our *Infidelity*: But God hath hitherto been more *gracious* than to deal so with us; and, I hope, we shall be more *just* to the Light which
he

he hath given us; and more true and faithful to our greatest interests, than to wait for *Conviction* till that time, when our preparations should be *finish'd*; and our *reward*, not our *work* be begun.

Let it lastly be remembred, that the separate State of Souls is a State of Darkness to the Deceas'd, because it deprives them of all direct and immediate Knowledge of the occurrences of that World which they have left. I say *direct* and *immediate* Knowledge; for they may know much of what passeth here, by *occasional Revelations* from God, whereinsoever the being inform'd of this or that occurrence may promote the happiness of *particular* Souls; Or they may know it by the Intelligence of those good Angels, who travel from Heaven to Earth, and hence back again thither by turns, to do good offices to *Militant Saints*. Hence we read of Joy in Heaven for the Repentance of every penitent Sinner. As for Relations that may be ungrateful to them, or may alloy their satisfaction; these may reasonably be presum'd to be conceal'd from them. In a Word, they are taken up with such great Objects as swallow up all useless remembrance of *past* Scenes, *ludicrous* compar'd to the *present*. They have little or no Curiosity about the *Revolutions*,

tions, which the Contests of *Princes* and *States* are always making in the Kingdoms of the Earth.

And O may the *Prospect* of so *august* a State call off our thoughts and passions from an Immoderate esteem and pursuit of the goods of this World, which was design'd for our *pilgrimage*, but not for our *resting-place*!

In the *succeeding* World all will not be *Noble* that are Noble in ours: Nobility *here* and Nobility *there* are two very different things. Not that any one shall forfeit the Glory and Happiness of the *future* State, by the heighth of his Birth, or the splendour and plenty of his Circumstances, or by the *comparative* greatness of his Knowledge; or by excelling in any Gifts of his Person.

But whoever shall be exalted *there* will be exalted for a good use of *distinguishing* advantages here; and whoever shall be degraded there will be degraded for *abusing* them, and neglecting to use them to God's Honour. See the *Prize* then that is set before you, who account your selves *Persons of Figure*; and so run your Race, by an *exemplary Beneficence*, as to obtain it: Let not your Eternity escape your thoughts so much as hitherto it hath done; but let the
the

the *Crowns* and *Coronets*, that are laid up for all who love God, be ever in your Eye. Seek for that *promotion* which will *fill* your *desires*, *exceed* your *conceptions*, and *surpass* your *hopes*. Think much of the certainty of Death, of a future Judgment, of the Terrors of the Lord against Sin here, in the Storms and Tempests of a troubled Conscience; and in the flames of Hell hereafter. Walk as *Children of the Light*, whilst the Light lasts; and make provision for your Souls, by a Magazine of Charity and good works. Let your *Heart* be where *true Treasure* alone can be found. Retire into your Closets; and so forget sometimes this World, as to *remember the Days of Darknes*, for they are many.

S E R.

SERMON XIII.

Concerning

CHRIST's Dominion over HADES,

PREACH'D ON

E A S T E R - D A Y.

REV. I. 18.

—I have the Keys of Hell and of Death.

WE have the last week been Contemplating him who was truly *the Son of God*: His Character appear'd to be bright and dazling: for he was not only *immaculate* in his behaviour: He not only did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Speech: But he continually went about doing Good; and manifested his *Glory* by wonderful Acts of *Beneficence*; and prov'd himself full of *Grace* and *Truth*. And yet when he came to his own, *His own receiv'd him not.*

S

This

This *Prophet*, tho' thus Mighty in *Word* and *Deed*, miss'd of Honour in his *own Country*: He spake as never Man spake, and wrought Cures as never Man wrought them; insomuch that all were at a loss to conceive whence he had all this Power. One would have thought that the *Jews* at least must have venerated this Example, whether they had strove to have transcrib'd it or not. And yet who so backward as the Jews truly to honour this Wonderful *Galilean*. The Gift of *Sight* to the *Blind*, of *Eloquence* to the *Dumb*, of *Activity* to the *Lame*, did not at all subdue their *stupidity* and *ingratitude*, since he did not assume the Pomp and Splendour of a *Martial Conquerour* of the *Romans*, to whom they were at that time under Subjection. Hence we find, that after his exertion of his Divinity, by a long train of *gracious* Miracles, he was despis'd and rejected of Men; a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief. Hence 'twas that we have seen him in so deplorable a Condition, that never any sorrow was like his sorrow: we have seen their Insolent *Governours* and more Insolent *Rabble* pour out Contempt and Reproach and Infamy without Reason or Measure upon him: Hence have we seen Rivers of Blood stream from his sacred Temples, and his Feet and Hands nail'd to the Cross:

Cross: Hence have we heard that dreadful Cry from the Blessed Jesus: *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Hence have we seen the Glory of our Orb so far Eclips'd, as to expire in the form of a Slave and a Malefactor on the Cross.

But tho' Men, *Vile enough*, could be found to have an Hand in beginning and ending this *Tragedy* without a *parallel*; and scarcely relenting after they had imprecated the Guilt of his precious Blood upon *themselves* and their *Posterity*: yet *Inanimate Nature* was not an Unconcern'd Spectatour of this Barbarous Treatment of the best of Men. The Heavens no sooner saw it, but they were astonish'd, and quite out of Countenance. Their Powers were shaken; the *Sun* and the *Moon* were Cloth'd with *shame* and *Darkness*, such as never was seen. The *Earth* was no sooner stain'd by the Blood of this Divine Benefactor, but it trembled for Horror, *Rocks* were not hard enough to want resentment on this occasion; for these too, with *the Veil of the Temple*, were rent asunder: *all Nature*, in short, conflicted with the Agonies of the *Tortur'd* and the *Dying*: And I doubt not but all those *Epistles* and *Gospels*, which have this last week been read to us, on this *ghastly* and *horrific* Subject, have pierc'd

our Hearts with Grief, and dissolv'd our Souls into a predominant strain of Pity and Commiseration.

Look stedfastly, I entreat you, on the *same Jesus*, who is the Author and finisher of our Faith, who, as the Captain of our Salvation, endur'd the Cross, and Despis'd the shame of it; that we by his Poverty might be made Rich; and by his Sufferings for our sakes might be Reconcil'd to God. But then, Remember, I now call upon you to View the *Holy Jesus* in *new Circumstances*: Behold him who died three Days since is now alive, and lives for evermore. Contemplate him who lately lov'd us with such a burning love, as to Wash us from our Sins in his own Blood, as *the first begotten from the Dead*. He could not long be held by the Bands of Death: Christ is Risen from the Dead: Death hath no more Dominion over him: Yea *Death* is become his *Captive*, and *Hell* his *Conquest*: O arise and bow before the Footstool of this *Divine* Conqueror: Shout with exceeding great Joy, and adore your *Saviour* in this glorious beginning of his *Triumphs*. This is the Day which the Lord hath made *signal* and *auspicious* to his Disciples by his Resurrection: He is not only risen himself from the Dead, but also able to raise others

too,

too, for *He hath the Keys of Hell and of Death.*

Now therefore we may reap in Joy, what we have sown in *Tears*; for *Christ's* having the Keys of Hell and of Death, doth import his having them intirely at his *Command* and *Disposal*. As God, he had them under his Command before: But since his Resurrection, *Hell* and *Death* have been plac'd in Subjection under him, consider'd in the *Mediatorial* Capacity of *God-man*.

The Greatness of this power, which our Mediator hath acquir'd by the Merits of his *Resurrection*, will best appear, by considering what that *Death* and what that *Hell* is, whereof he is here said to have the *Keys*.

The *Death* mention'd in this place is the *first* Death. Now tho' the *second* Death is the more dreadful of the *two*, as those who fall under it do find by a sad experience; yet, the first Death is a greater and more formidable Tyrant by the Multitude of his Subjects. For the *Second* Death being a Banishment of the Persons of *Apostate Angels* and *Men* from the presence of God, and the influence of the Comfortable Irradiations of the *Holy Ghost*, do's only befall

the *irrecoverably Impenitent*: Whereas the *first* Death falls alike upon all. The Souls of the *Penitent*, and of *justified* Christians, are separated by *it* from their *Bodies*, as well as the Souls of the most *incurable Reprobates*. For as *Wit*, and *Strength*, and *Beauty*, and *Wealth*, and *Nobility* cannot keep their *Owners* from the *Grave*; so *Holiness* *it self* doth not exempt the *Best* Persons from being Sentenc'd to undergo *this* sort of Death. *All* must be under the *Jurisdiction* of it for a while, Upon this account 'tis call'd a *King*, the Prince of Terrors; and Men, through fear of Death, are said to be subject to it all their lives long. Christ's Power of the Keys over this Death includes in it his Power, to prolong our lives to what extent of Duration he pleases: He has hereby Power to *kill* and to *lock* us up at pleasure under the Custody of Death; and to *make us alive*, and to *release* us when *Prisoners of the Grave* whenever he thinks fit: To him, by vertue of these Keys, the Issues of *Life* and *Death* do belong. He appoints in what *part* of Life we shall quit it; and whether we shall die by a *Disease*, or some *Violent Accident*: He mitigates our *Agonies* in a *Dying Hour*; and *ministers* or *withholds* Consolation in the *fiery Tryal*, as it seemeth

eth best to his good Will. He Orders not only the *Time when*, and the Disease whereby; but the *place where* we shall die. In short all the *Circumstances* of our Death are foreknown by God and by Christ. Some *Souls* leave the *Bodies* with more *favorable* pangs; and in a more *graceful* manner than others: He knows whether we belong to that happy number, or not. To him, To him, I say, the Lord and Prince of Life, let us ascribe whatever extent of Life we have arriv'd to: To him let us make our addresses for the Preservation of our Souls and Bodies, in that *Mystical Union* and *Harmony* they at present enjoy. Length of Days are in his Right Hand, for the Keys of *Death* and of Life are there. Do we desire to be graciously spar'd, till we have settled our Peace with God; till we are rooted and grounded in a *sound Faith* and a *filial Love* of God; till we have done the work which we were sent into the World to do, and can finish our Course with Joy, and can face Death without being dismayed? These without doubt are wise desires, if we use the proper means of accomplishing such Wishes. By Prayers to the blessed *Jesus*, by a *Penitential* frame of Spirit; by an habit of *humble dependence* upon his favour, we shall secure an *Interest* in him,

who alone upholdeth Life, and is plenteously pitiful to the Souls in Anguish that cry unto him. *Jesus* is now the Conveyer of *Strength of Body*, of a *Divine Temper*, of *Peace of Mind*, of *refined Morals*, of a *polite and Heavenly deportment* in Life, of *Courage of Heart*, and of a Graceful behaviour in the trying hour of Death. In *his* Arms we cannot perish, nor fall from God at the last. Seek therefore his favour and protection, for this is an Anchor of Hope both sure and stedfast. *The Lord is my Light and Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

This habit of *Divine Affiance* in Christ will still be more confirm'd, if we contemplate him not only as the Lord and Conqueror of Death; but also holding the Keys of *Hell* in his Hand; and managing them with a *despotic* Power and Command. *Hell*, in our Common use of the Word, stands merely for *the Regions and Prisons of Condemn'd Spirits*: But the Greek Word *Hades*, which is here rendred *Hell*, do's not signify any *particular Regions of the Dead*: But *the whole State and World of the Dead*. Wherefore Christ's having the Keys of *Hades* implys not only his having *Evil Spirits* under his Foot; but his

his having a Sovereign command of all the *Territories* of Death, and of all *places* which are *Receptacles* of *Persons* *deceas'd*, *whether good or bad*: This Article of his Conquest, by his *Resurrection*, doth subject vast and populous Dominions to the Empire of the Great *Mediator* between *God* and *Man*. Men of all *Characters*, of all *Times*, and of all *Countries* become his Subjects; for all do die, and all that are Dead are under the *uncontroul'd* Superintendence of him who hath the *Keys* of *Hades*. Who can number those that are *already* Dead? and yet their number is daily *Increasing*: for the *Grave* is no more satisfied with *Devouring*, than the Eye is with Seeing, or the Ear with Hearing. And yet *out of this Eater comes forth Meat*; for tho' the *Grave* devours the *Living*, it *propagates* the *Dead*.

The Kingdom of *Hades* is branch'd forth into several large Divisions: for besides its General Division into the Regions of the *Righteous Dead*, and the Regions of the *Impenitent Dead*: These two *opposite Territories* are *subdivided* into several *Distinctions*. *Good* and *Bad* Men liv'd in this World under different *Dispensations* of *Religion*; and are *Conclass'd* in different *Apartments*, according to the *Dispensations* under which they liv'd. All *blissful* Souls have

have not as yet free intercourse with *Patriarchs, Prophets* and *Apostles* in the World of *separate Souls*; no more than all Men who live here have been Inhabitants of *China* or *France*. *Holy Jews* are by themselves; and *Wicked Jews* are so too: *Holy Christians* have their *separate Mansions*; and *Wicked Christians* are Confin'd in separate Apartments appointed by Christ for them.

Now when our Saviour descended into *Hades*, as we profess to believe in our Recital of the *Apostles Creed*; he, in the *interim* between his *Death* and *Resurrection*, survey'd and took possession of all the vast *extensive* Regions of the Dead. At that time, among other Prophecies, that was fulfill'd, which *proclaim'd the acceptable year of the Lord*; and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. For at that time, as being one of the *Jubilees* of the *Messiah*, the blessed Jesus, in honour to his Cross and approaching Resurrection, did in all probability remove Holy Souls into brighter Regions, and Communicate *larger* portions of Light and Joy than they were refresh'd with before. At that time too, on the same account, the very Torments of the Damn'd might (as long as this Festival lasted) be quite *suspended* or *mitigated* at least.

least. These were extraordinary Acts of *Royal Mercy*, peculiar to the brightness of this Glorious Day: But *Christ* now Governs the Regions of *Hades*, by *fix'd* and *standing* Rules of Favour to the *Righteous*, and of a *Just* Severity to the *Wicked*. He distributes both sorts of Dead into a beautiful *Diversity* of Classes in proportion to their *Original* Trusts and Talents, and their *various* improvements of them. It Concerns us to remember, that as soon as we shall be numbred among the Dead, we shall belong to one of the two opposite sorts of them. If we should be *once* cast into those Regions of *Hades*, which are allotted to the Impenitent Dead, we may be remov'd into more tormentful Regions hereafter for the worse: But we shall never be remov'd into the Regions of those *Blessed Dead* who died in the Lord. *After Death* to the *Impenitent* comes a *Terrible Judgment*; and after the Sentence of that Judgment *Misery* without *end*, and without *remedy* and *allay* will be our Wretched portion and Inheritance.

But with the *Righteous*, with *Penitent Believers* 'twill be quite otherwise: Light shines upon them even in the Valley of Death: when they die they go no whither but where *Jesus* hath been before them: *Je-*
sus

Jesus and his Holy Angels guide their Souls, when departed out of the Body in the new and Marvellous way : He, who hath the Keys of Death and of Hades, introduceth them into *the Suburbs* of the new Jerusalem, and will in process of time open the Gates of the Kingdom of Heaven to them. O Blessed Souls under such a *Conductor* ! Why need we now fear to Die, if we live under the influence of such a Faith in Christ as worketh by Love ! O Jesus, O thou kind *Physician* and *Comforter* of Souls, that contend with Hosts of Temptations in Life, and with Hosts of Terrors at Death. Behold our Conflicts ; succour us with thy presence ; and replenish and fortify our Souls with that perfect Love of thee, and those ardours for thy Kingdom which last out fear, and scatter all misgivings of Heart from thy people :

These Thoughts are not only useful to arm us against a *servile* fear of Death on our own account ; but also to Comfort us whilst mourning for the affecting loss of *Religious Friends* and *Relations*. Tho' Nature's Charms in vain pleaded for their longer continuance amongst us, tho' *Death* can be *aw'd* by no ones *Greatness* ; tho' it can be *soften'd* into forbearance by no ones *Misery* ; tho' *Vertue* it self can't ward off the

Rigid

Rigid stroke Decreed for *all*; tho', I say, it knows not what it is to be *Terrified*, or what it is to *Pity*; but is *inflexible* in its *fatal Resolutions* against the *Beautiful*, the *Accomplish'd*, the *Meritorious*, and the most *Zealous* Servants of God: yet, since the *Righteous* and their *Works* are in the Hands of *Jesus*, we know that it must be well with *them*: They are Gainers by the present loss of their Bodies; and therefore our loss shall not be *Insupportable* to us.

We have humour'd Nature in *too long* a *Condolence*; too long because too selfish: Sorrow upon this Prospect must finish its Course, and terminate into juster and *congratulating* Passions: *Jesus* has welcomed your safe Arrival on the Shore of a blessed Country: We too join with Him and Choirs of Happy Souls; and wish you Joy of your new Dwelling: 'Tis no small pleasure to us, O all ye Righteous Dead, to think how pleasingly you are now transported with the delightful Wonders that surround you on all sides. O may all who *saw* your *Virtues*; may all who *admir'd* them; may all who receiv'd *inestimable* benefits from them be followers of your Faith and Patience; that where you are now; we may be one day; and with you Inherit the Promises.

S E R-

SERMON XIV.

Preach'd before the HONORABLE

Society of LINCOLN'S-INN

in the Morning, and at the

TEMPLE-CHURCH

in the Afternoon.

ECCL. VIII.†8.

— *There is no Discharge in that War.* —

THE *War* here mention'd may be either understood of *the conflict between the Soul and the Body*, at the time of the Soul's departure out of the Body, alluding to the reluctance which both parts of our Nature have to a *separation*; or it may be understood of *the Conflict which the Soul of Man, when newly departed out of the Body, hath with Evil Spirits in the neighbouring Kingdoms of the Air.*

I confess, I prefer the latter of these two
Senses,

Senses, because the Words of the Context seem to favour my Judgment in this particular. The whole *verse* begins thus, *There is no Man that hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit*; that is, we can hold these Souls of ours no longer in these Bodies than God thinks fit to permit us; *neither hath he power in the Day of Death*, that is, as soon as ever our Souls are dismiss'd from these Bodies they cease to enjoy the opportunity of doing several things which they could do before; nay and further, *many Acts of the Soul, which can be exerted by it out of the Body, will not (if they then first begin to be exerted) find such a Gracious acceptance, nor be attended with those happy Consequences as they would have been before.* Then follows the clause, which I have pitch'd upon for the Ground-work of my present Discourse, *and there is no discharge in that War.* Had the Thought of this passage been express'd in more Words, 'twould, I doubt not, have been to this effect; *As soon as our Souls are dismiss'd from these Bodies they will all meet with invisible Enemies of the same kind; and must encounter with them; whether they are furnish'd with those dispositions which are necessary to subdue them, or be not furnish'd with them.*

In order to a due Illustration of this great Truth, which is so little considerd, 'twill be proper for us to consider, that *the Scripture* speaks of *two* opposite Kingdoms: *the Kingdom of God* (which is often call'd the *Kingdom of Light*, and *the Kingdom of Heaven*) is one of them: And *the Kingdom of the Devil*, and his Angels (which is sometimes call'd *the Kingdom of Darkness*) is the other. To the *first* belong the Holy Angels and *Good Men*: To the *Latter Apostate* Angels and *Men incurably Wicked*. In the present World of Men we have our choice which we will belong to. *Good* Angels are frequently more or less solliciting us for *God*, and *bad* Angels are courting an Interest in us for the enlargement of the usurp'd Empire of the *Devil*: Neither sort of them solicit us so strongly, in *ordinary* cases, as that they can't be withstood by us: None are so Wicked as to meet with no good Motions of Grace from *Divine* Spirits: None are so Good as to escape a troublesome Sense of the power of Temptations from the Spirits of Darkness. Neither the power of good created Spirits, nor the power of Evil Spirits is irresistible by us: 'Tis at our liberty to withstand their impetuous Suggestions, or to close in with them as long as our State of Tryal lasts.

None

None but *the Uncreated Spirit of God* is *irresistible* in his operations upon the Children of Men; and he doth not exert an *irresistible* Power upon them; but in extraordinary Cases, when the Designs and Glory of his *Governing* Providence can't be brought about and compleated without such a manifestation of his Power.

His *Ordinary* management of *Humane* Creatures, in a State of *Tryal*, is by the ministry of Created Spirits, who discipline them by *powerful* but *resistible* sollicitations, according to their own temper and disposition, under the superintendency of his own Uncreated Spirit. One kind of Created Spirits, who themselves are irrecoverably fall'n from God's favour, tempt us by the *lures* and *menaces* of *sensual Pleasures* and *Terrors* to do the Works of Darkness, and to neglect the Duties of Piety and Virtue. Another kind of Created Spirits, who are immoveably fix'd in God's favour, admonish and encourage us, by the inducements and the restraints of *Spiritual Pleasures and Terrors*, to decline the Pollutions of Vice, to be improving our selves in *celestial* tempers of Mind, and to be Examples of all kinds of *Virtue* and *Beneficence*.

These sollicitations of both sides cannot

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be avoided by us. God prevents us with kind impressions, in Vertue's behalf, from those Holy Spirits who are the Guardians of *Particular Souls*, as well as of *Kingdoms* and *Churches*: And he suffers the invisible Agents of the Devil to try us with the impressions of Vanity, in order to seduce us from our obedience to God. Hence the Life and Conversation of Souls here is call'd a *Warfare*: We must either, like *Balaam*, withstand the Angel of the Lord, and of the Covenant of Grace: Or oppose such as that Evil Angel, which contended with *Joshuah* in the Prophet *Zachariah*. For we are surrounded with two Hosts, and this World is a kind of *Mabanaïm*: This is God's standing Administration even of his Elect; and *Militant* is one inseparable Character of Christ's Church in its present condition.

This is our field of Tryal, wherein we must either Conquer with *Michael* and his Angels; or fall with the *Infernal* Crew of that *Dragon*, and *Apollyon*, who is the Spirit that rules in the Children of Disobedience. In this World, by resisting him, we may overcome him: But if we don't resist and overcome him *now*, we shall not *after Death* have strength to do it. We shall not *then* any longer have our choice of our side:

side: 'twill be a folly *then* to attempt to change it; for as soon as we shall be numbered among the Dead, we shall launch forth into the confines of the Prince of this Wicked World, that is, of the wicked part of it; for his rendezvous is in the *lower Air* and *Firmament*, which is adjacent to the Earth we now live in.

Hence he is call'd *Eph. II. 2. The Prince of the Power of this Air*. So that when we die we do of course travel into his Dominions, where nothing but the Assistance and Conduct of the Holy Angels can rescue us out of his Jurisdiction. Now *These* will not relieve any, except those *Good Souls* who listned to and complied with their Heavenly Dictates and Suggestions in *this present Life*. Souls (whose *timely Repentance*, and course of *lively Faith*, *begun* and *finish'd*, whilst they tabernacled in *Probationary Bodies*, did give them an appropriated Interest in Jesus) have the mark of the Lamb of God upon them, are cloth'd with the White Robes of a Sanctified Temper, and can claim the Guards of Angels for their Convoy, when they Sail out of these Bodies into the Immense Sea of Eternity; and will as surely find them there ready at hand to help and deliver them, as they will meet with the opposite order of *black* and *Ma-*

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licious Angels to terrifie and daunt them. Then, as well as before, the Gracious Promise of the Devout Psalmist will be made good to them. *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.* Then, as well as before, they are sent forth to minister both to and for them as Heirs of Salvation. For so we read *Luke xvi. the Angels carried the Soul of Lazarus into Abrahams bosom.**

They who belong to God's Kingdom will have his Artillery for their Succour in Distress: they will, like *Elisha*, have *Horses and Chariots of Fire* to Defend them from the rapacious insults of Devils and Devilish Souls; and to waft them safe into those Apartments of Peace and Bliss, which are al-

* Thus Macarius the Egyptian in his 22d. Homily observes, that if a Soul dieth in a State of unforgiven Sin, multitudes of Sinister Spirits appear and drag them into their dismal Apartment, as being one on their side; and so he becomes an eternal Vassal to the Powers of Darknes; for this I take to be the Import of that Expression, *εἰς τὸ ἴδιον μυστήριον*; But when the Holy Servants of God depart out of their Bodies, Choirs of Angels receive their Souls into their own apartment, into a Pure World, *εἰς τὴν καθαρόν αἰῶνα*; and so bring them to the Lord. Philastrius has a passage somewhat a kin to this in his Tract of Heresies. *Anima Hominis cum exierit de seculo, sive bona, sive mala, ab Angelo ducitur in locum statutum, ut in futurum percipiat juxta quod gessit in hoc seculo constituta.* That is, the Soul of every Man when he hath gone out of this World, whether Good or Bad, is conducted by an Angel into a place appointed for him, that he may receive according to his fix'd and final behaviour in this World.

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lotted for the abode of *the Righteous Dead* till the Resurrection. As bright Squadrons, and Myriads of Angels, do now continually wing it betwixt Heaven and Earth, carrying our Prayers to Jesus, and bringing down blessings from God to us (as Bees do betwixt their Hives and Flowers) sometimes *instructing*, as they did *Daniel*; *Dan. x.* Sometimes *comforting*, as they did *Hagar*, *Gen. xii.* and *Elijah I. Kings xix.* sometimes *assisting* us against our Enemies, as they did *Israel* against *Senacherib*, and *St. Peter* in Prison: sometimes defending our tender ignorant Persons, in the Stages of Infancy and Childhood, keeping them in all their ways, that they dash not their Foot against a Stone; for so we read *Matt. xviii.* That *the Angels of little Children always behold the face of God in Heaven.* As, I say, they have done so many good Offices for us in our present Estate; so also they, unless we receive these favours in vain, will not leave as in our greatest *agonies* and *extremities*, I mean those of *Death*, and of our first entrance into the amazing Wilderness of a *new* and *Inhospitable World*, which must first be pass'd through, before we can arrive into the spacious and delightful Mansions of the *Just*; for *these* are situated much remoter from the Earth than

the Prisons, Dens and Forests of Condemn'd Spirits and Souls are: For they are chain'd and tormented in the lowest and meanest tracts of the Air, which are contiguous to the turbulent and sordid Scene wherein we dwell: *sordid and turbulent*, I say, because the Wickedness of its Inhabitants has made it so; for as *it is the Work of God* it is *good and beautiful* in its place and season; but *sordid* still, if compar'd with more beautiful Worlds beyond it, which are the workmanship of the same great and adorable Builder of all things. Oh in what Confusion will Souls just strip'd of Bodies find themselves, when all on a sudden they will be thus surrounded with spiritual Beasts of prey; and shall discern all those good Angels, which so kindly courted them to their own Happiness before, standing aloof from them; and no sufficient friend at hand to help and relieve them! How confounded will they be, when all their Guilt lies at once, in all its dismal aggravations, before their enraged Consciences, which (tho' they might be blinded before, by the Opiates of *Idleness* and *Luxury*) have now recover'd their perfect sight; and are endued with as many Eyes as *Argus*; and all of them full charg'd with Fury in their Looks against themselves! The sight of the misery of o-
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ther Spirits will not at all *mitigate* their Grief, but *inflame* it by their ill natur'd Triumphs over these unhappy Strangers, whom they perceive to be fall'n finally into their own doom and condemnation.

But with *Righteous Souls, newly set at liberty from their Bodies*, it is far otherwise: for tho', to be sure, at first they are, and must, and cannot but be dash'd, by the *unnatural way*, by which even for *forgiven Sins*, they are remov'd out of a *Mortal* into an *Immortal* World; and, by the surprising Wonders, which must immediately present themselves to their Understandings, at their first entrance upon the *Invisible* Scene, yet the horror of that surprize is quickly over, and has neither the *tormentful sensations*, nor the *tedious duration* of a *Romish Purgatory*.

Some Horror to be sure they must undergo, by reason of the greatness and suddenness of that change which they find in themselves, tho' for the better; since were they immediately arriv'd at the blissful Seats of the Just, yet the very astonishment struck into them, by so vast and new a Glory, must affect their Minds with such an *oppressive* pleasure, as a dazzling Light doth a weak Eye, just let loose from the Dungeons of Sleep and Darkness: And this Horror

must be much the greater, because there is no arriving at the Mansions of the Just, without first seeing the *horrific* Territories of Condemn'd Angels and Men in our Way thither; the very Joy which is excited by the mere sight of the Precipice and danger they have escap'd, and the very pity wherewith they can't but be mov'd; for the deplorable Objects they see *there* would be too hard for them, and quite stagger and overset their thinking Powers, were there not good Angels to strengthen and support them, in proportion to their Tryals; tho' their time of passing through them may perhaps be almost ended as soon as they are begun. So short an Interval of ungrateful astonishment is of course rewarded, by the redoubled Joy which naturally ensues it, after it is over.

St. Antony (as we have it Recorded of him, in a Life written by *St. Athanasius*) relates a Vision to his Friends, very pertinent to the Subject we are now upon. For some Friends of his, coming upon him unawares, found him alone in a flood of Tears, which made them very curious to know the occasion of his being affected so inordinately with the Passions of Grief. After much importunity he gave them this answer. *In these Tears I rather vented my Joy than*
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my Grief; for I am just recover'd from a very wonderful Vision. At the top of yonder Mountain I had a Vast prospect given me, thro' the utmost extent of the lowest Regions of the Air: Thro' this Desart, and immense tract of Space, I saw prodigious Troops of Devils, both on the Right Hand and on the Left; and a considerable number of the Souls of Persons newly Deceas'd, striving to fly thro' the mid'st of them; but in vain; for they were immediately stop'd in their journey, and seiz'd upon by Devils. Among the rest there was the Soul of a Righteous Friend, who, I have reason to think, is now a dying; and he was stop'd too, tho' not so soon as others by the Prince of Darknes. At that instant there appear'd some bright Angels, and demanded that he should not be stop'd as the rest were. The Prince of Darknes told them that he had been guilty of such and such crimes, alledging the Circumstances of Facts, Time and Place: What you say is true, said they, for he was once Guilty of them, but he is not now; because he brought forth fruits meet for Repentance; whilst God would accept of Repentance; wherefore he is justified and wash'd from his Sins: for which reason we demand him out of your custody.

custody. And so they rescu'd him and transported him safe into the Harbours of the Just.

St. *Antony* was so affected with this Vision, that, tho' he liv'd a very strict life before, he led a far stricter one afterwards; and doubled his diligence to work out his Salvation with fear and trembling. In like manner, let this solemn representation of the difficult passage of Souls, newly departed, thro' the Kingdoms of the Air, dwell much in our Thoughts; and let us in the last place make a practical Improvement of the serious Consideration of it. Heaven can't be besieg'd, nor Hell defeated but by Violence: *Prayer* and *Self-Denyal*; *Consideration* and *Watchfulness*, are all of them necessary Ingredients of that Christian Magnanimity, by which the Enemy of Souls must be overthrown.

Thus therefore let us prepare our selves against those Hosts of Evil Spirits, which we shall see in the other World, by overcoming them now: for *here* too we are beset with them, tho' they are *invisible*; since we wrestle not only with *Flesh* and *Blood*, but with *Principalities* and *Powers* and *Spiritual Wickedness in high Places*. Our weapons for this reason must not be *Carnal* but *Spiritual*, and powerful to the pulling down

down the Strong holds of Sin and Satan in our *Hearts* and *Lives*. Let us anticipate in our Thoughts what Joy shall arise within us, when we shall see our selves got safe thro' such Dangers, and carried off Triumphant from the Tribunal of *the Accuser of the Brethren*. Then shall we be out of the reach of all his Malice and Envy and Rage against us, who rangeth about like a roaring Lion seeking whom he may devour.

But how will it pierce our Souls through and through with many sorrows, to find our selves seiz'd on for their prey; and to have no *Deliverer*.

Once more let us call to mind this great Truth: When we die our Souls will as certainly be conveyed into the Regions of the Air, as our Bodies will be laid in the Dust; *there* they will meet with terrible Spirits, and have a trying occasion to use the words of *Jehoshaphat* to God, with most awful Devotion: O my God, wilt thou not judge them, for we have no might against this great Company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do; but our Eyes are upon thee; O Lord Hear; O Lord forgive; O Lord Harken and do; not for our righteousnesses, but for thy great Mercies.

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In the next World we shall find both a new sort and a new set of Noble and Ignoble, of Rich and Poor, of Philosophers and Idiots, of Courtiers and Peasants, of Celebrated and of obscure Persons: No Friend there will be so valuable as Christ Jesus; nor will any thing recommend us so much as Consciousness of our having finish'd the great Work of Repentance, so far at least as we were able to do it. Faith and Virtue in that State will stand us most in stead; for it is Honour and Beauty, and Strength and Riches, and every thing to those who carry it along with them: But Remember that this must accompany us thither, since 'tis not to be first sought for, tho' it may be improv'd, in that World. Be furnish'd then beforehand with the Fruits of the Spirit: by this means in the Valley of Death in the very shades of Hades; nay of Hell it self, you may Sing with Courage: *Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him: Yea, as smoke before the Wind, and as Wax before the Fire, let them melt away, vanish and be Consum'd.*

If our Souls are well Arm'd with the impenetrable Armour of Faith and Charity; we shall be cheer'd with the presence of
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good Angels; and all the attempts of Thousands on our *right* and of ten Thousands on our *left* Hand will be baffled and confounded: for the *Lord Jesus* will send timely Succours and receive us to himself. *Against the Fruits of the Spirit* (which are *Divine Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Meekness, Temperance and Goodness*) there is no Law. Against these there is no *Tribunal*, neither in *this* World, nor in *that which is to come*.

S E R.

SERMON XV.

UPON

HADES and SCHEOL.

ISAIAH XXXVIII.†18.

Death cannot Celebrate Thee.

KING *Hezekiah* being recovered from a very *dangerous* Sickness, which (if it had at that time cut him off, as it would have done, without the interposal of a *Miraculous* Mercy) had hinder'd him of the accomplishment of some *Noble* designs, that he seem'd to have then in his mind; Sings an *Hymn* of Praise and Thankfulness to God, recorded here at length for this *special* instance of God's goodness to him; in adding *fifteen* Years more to his length of Days; and thereby giving him the opportunity of recommending himself the better to the Inhabitants of the *other* World in his later entrance into it, by doing much more Service

to the Inhabitants of *this* World before he left it.

I said (saith he verse the 10) I shall go to the gates of the Grave, I am depriv'd of the residue of my years: But thou hast, in love to my Soul, deliver'd it from the Pit of Corruption: For the Grave cannot praise thee; Death cannot celebrate thee: That is, “ the State
 “ which Souls pass into when they remove
 “ out of these Bodies; and this present
 “ State deprives them of all opportunity
 “ of glorifying thee so, as they can, whilst
 “ they continue here, and do quicken these
 “ mortal Bodies. Those who would not
 “ glorify thee, whilst they were in this
 “ World, can offer no Sacrifice of Praise,
 “ which thou wilt accept from them, when
 “ they are stript of their Bodies. And tho’
 “ *Holy* Souls deceas’d do, in the World of
 “ separate Souls, chaunt forth thy praises,
 “ and ascribe honour and praise to thee, by
 “ the Gratitude and the resign’d and heavenly temper of *disbodied* Spirits, yet,
 “ till the general *Resurrection*, they cannot glorify thee with the Praises and Obedience of *embodied* Creatures; because
 “ they have now no Bodies to animate and actuate in thy Sevice, and so are as incapable of preparing themselves, by the proper

“ proper obedience of *probationary* embo-
 “ died Creatures, against the Resurrection,
 “ and the last State of embodied Creatures,
 “ as they will be, even after they are actu-
 “ ally enstated, in the *last* World of embo-
 “ died Spirits.

This *Paraphrase* of this *Text* may be
 allow'd to be Just and reasonable, because
 the *Hebrew* word *Scheol* rendred *ʔdms*, by
 the *Septuagint* is us'd not only for a *Re-*
ceptacle of the Bodies of the Dead, (which
 we call the *Grave*, but also for a *Recepta-*
cle of the Souls of the Deceas'd, tho' 'tis
 translated *the Grave* in this place; and
 sometimes *the Pit*, a Word of the same
 import: Nay, and sometimes *Hell*, which is
 the most improper *English* word by which
 it can be rendred, because our popular and
 modern use of it implies *the miserable State*
of Impenitent Souls, after Death: where-
 as the *Hebrew* Word, often so render'd,
 signifies *the State of Good and Wicked*
Souls after Death in common; and not
 the *particular* place where *Wicked* Souls
 are Confin'd between the time of *Death*
 and the *Resurrection*: not that we are to
 conceive that *Holy* and *Wicked* Souls, after
 Death, are receiv'd into one *common* place
 of abode; or that *either* of them are *there*
 altogether exempt from all Capacity of
 action

action and suffering: or do both of them
sleep till the Resurrection in a State of *in-*
activity and silence, as some have vainly
 imagin'd: But the reason why the State of
 both *Wicked* and *Holy* Souls deceas'd is
 Character'd by the same *Hebrew* and *Greek*
 words in the *Scriptures* is this; both the
 State of *Wicked* Souls after *Death*, and
 the State of *Holy* Souls after *Death*, (tho'
 they are lodg'd in *two different* places of
 abode) have several *common* properties
 wherein they agree: among others they
 have *this self-same* property in common,
 that neither *Wicked* Souls nor *Holy* Souls
 after *Death* can alter the *State* and *Temper*
 of themselves, as they could before *Death*:
 The *Holy* do continue *Holy*; and the *Wick-*
ed do continue *Wicked* for ever. So that
 these words, *The Grave cannot praise*
thee; *Death cannot celebrate thee*, are e-
 quivalent to these, " the place where the
 " Bodies of the Dead are laid cannot
 " praise thee; nor can the place where
 " the Souls of the Dead are celebrate thee.
 Now these being plainly *figurative* Forms
 of Speech must amount to the *Contents* of
 this *enlargement* in plainer Words, " As
 " the Bodies of the *Dead*, that are con-
 " fin'd in a *Grave*, cannot *there* perform
 " any acts of *Service* and *Glory* to thee, as
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"they could before, whilst tenanted by
 "Souls: So the *Souls* of the *Deceas'd*,
 "in their State of *separation* from *Bodies*,
 "can offer no *probationary Gratitude* of
 "embodied Spirits there. Those who would
 not praise and glorify God, whilst they
 dwelt in Bodies of Tryal, in vain pretend
 to begin to glorify God, after they are
 turn'd out of those Bodies. For their Pro-
 fessions of Gratitude (were such Mens Souls
 then capable of that Virtue) are not regard-
 ed, nor look'd upon as such by God. For
 tho' the *separate* Souls of *Holy Men* De-
 ceas'd do live a Life of Praise and Glory
 to God, in the naked Capacity of *separate*
 Spirits there; their Glorification of God
 is not *such a Glorification* of him, as they
 exercis'd, whilst they were in Bodies: 'Tis
 not *preparative* to their *Eternity*, but is
 the *first* and *imperfecter* part of their ho-
 mage to God in their *Eternity* and *unalte-
rable* State of Joy and Reward; so that
 from God's acceptance of the Praises of
 such Naked Souls *after Death*, who liv'd
 a Life of Gratitude to God in their *forego-
ing* State of Probationary Union to Bodies;
 Wicked Men, who will not live such a Life
 of Gratitude to him, during their subsistence
 in Bodies, cannot with the least shadow of
 good Sense and Reason hope, that after
 they

they are Dead, they shall be in a State and Temper fit to Praise and Glorify God; or that any *Praises* or *Gratitude* which their *separate* Souls can or shall minister and offer to God *there*, will induce him, when their Souls shall hereafter be United again to Bodies, to admit them to the proper *Happiness* and *Heaven* of *Embodied* Spirits at the *General Resurrection*. No; those, who will not live holily in their State of *Probationary Union* to Bodies, cannot live holily in the State of *separation* from Bodies; and Consequently cannot live *Happily* in a State of *Reunion* to Bodies; for the Resurrection will make none happy by Reunion to Bodies, but those whose Souls are found Holy and in Favour with God before the Resurrection; and did live holily during their Probationary Union to Bodies.

Accordingly the *Septuagint* translate the words thus, Οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἐν αὐτῷ αἰνέσουσί σε, οὐδὲ οἱ ἀποθάνοντες βιολογήσουσί σε. *Those which are in the World of separate Souls shall not praise thee, neither shall the Dead celebrate thee: that is, they shall not celebrate thee, as they did whilst in Bodies; and as I do, at this time of my prolong'd continuance in a Probationary Union to my Body.* The words which immediately

follow do very much strengthen this *explanation*: *They who go down to the pit*: or, as the Original, *Οἱ ἐν ᾗδης*, *They who are in the World of separate Souls can't hope for thy Truth*. They have no promises of *mercy* and *acceptance* of any Repen-
 tance that can be exercis'd there to rely on. If they find any Mercy 'tis not revealed in thy Word by which we are to be judg'd. 'Tis an Uncovenanted Mercy and such an one as those who enjoy the Light, which thy *Israelites* enjoy, cannot without rash-
 ness and presumption depend upon. Grant me therefore a sufficient Continuance in this present State, that I may not be cast upon dangerous hopes, nor deceitfully rely on an *improbable* and *uncovenanted* Mercy. *The Living, the Living shall praise thee, as I do this Day*: That is; Souls whilst sub-
 sisting in Bodies: for it follows; *The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth*. But Holy Souls don't do that in the other World, where the Relation of *Parents* and *Child* hath no place; and their Conversation with their Fellow-crea-
 tures upon Earth is at an end. Whence we may plainly learn, that this Text doth not imply that Holy Souls are asleep; or that they do not Praise God in the other World before the Resurrection; but that they can-
 not

not Praise God *there* with the Gratitude of the *Inhabitants of the Earth*, or of *embodied Souls*.

I have been the longer in opening this place, because it hath been wrested by some who are mightily pleas'd with the entertainment of a very *Unphilosophical* opinion; namely, that the Souls of the Deceas'd do *sleep* till the Resurrection: Which opinion, if it be true, St. *Paul* must be very much out; when speaking of the Saints, he saith, *whilst we are in the Body, we are absent from the Lord, and when we are out of the Body, we are present with the Lord*. To be *present with the Lord* is a great expression; and can't but signify a *Nobler* State than a State of *sleep* and *inactivity* can be imagin'd to be.

Besides, the clearing of this place may be of use to rescue *other Scriptures* somewhat like it from the same violence. Of this sort is the *fifth verse* of the *seventh Psalm*. *In Death there is no remembrance of thee; In the Grave who shall give thee thanks?* that is, " *There is no peni-*
 " *tential Remembrance of thee; there is*
 " *no longer opportunity of Glorifying thee*
 " *with the Gratitude of embodied Crea-*
 " *tures; for as Embodied Creatures, whilst*
 " *immur'd in Flesh, don't Converse with*
 " *their*

" their deceas'd Friends and Relations; so
 " our deceas'd Acquaintance don't Converſe
 " any longer with thoſe Relations that are
 " ſtill in a State of Union to Bodies: for
 " their State is a State of *Darkneſs* to
 " us: We ſee not them: They ſee not us:
 " There is a *Gulph* fix'd between Both.
 " As therefore we cannot profit the *Dead*
 " by our Prayers for them; ſo they can-
 " not profit the ſight of their *Survivers*
 " by their example: They can't Praise God
 " in the Church of embodied Souls, nor be
 " exciting them to Piety and Good Works.
 " They can now no longer pay the Wor-
 " ſhip and Duty of embodied Creatures.
 'Tis for this Reaſon that other Good Men,
 as well as *David* in that *Pſalm*, do ſo
 earneſtly entreat God to continue them long
 enough in this World, to perfect their Re-
 pentance for their Sins, becauſe *now* it will
 be graciouſly accepted; and to be *exempla-*
ry for Virtue in this World, where the *pre-*
ſence of their Example may be uſeful to
Contemporaries, and the *remembrance* of
 it to *Poſterity*. And therefore an excellent
Jewiſh Writer (*viz.* R. *Jacob* in *Pirke*
Aboth. C. 4.) very well obſerves. *Tho'*
one Hour of that refreshment of Spirit,
with which Good Souls are regal'd in a
State of Separation, is better than a
whole

whole Life of such Comforts as they enjoy in their present State: Yet, one hour of Repentance and usefulness in the present World is better than an whole Life of Repentance and usefulness in the World of separation. For, if Repentance and usefulness doth profit any particular Souls in a State of separation, their case is extraordinary; and God deviates from his usual Methods of dispensing Mercy: and moreover we are wholly uncertain about it. But we assuredly know that the Repentance and usefulness of embodied Souls is graciously accepted of and rewarded by God.

Wherefore, when *Holy and Devout Men* in *Scripture* express an earnest desire to continue longer here; this desire doth not in such Persons proceed from a *fondness* for *this World*, or a *disdain* of the *other*, as tho' it were an *irksome* or *unactive* State, but from a resolute desire and purpose of giving the Living here, before they leave them, a more ample assurance of their enmity against Sin, and of their sorrow for their past Folly and former Impenitence; and that they may have a full opportunity to publish to those that are about them the pleasures which they find, in the *renovation* of their *Minds* and *Lives*, by the power of the Grace and Spirit of God.

20 'Twas with this view that the *Psalmist*
 utter'd these Expostulations *Psalm. xxx. 9.*
What profit is there in my Blood when I
go down to the pit? Shall the Dust praise
thee? Shall it declare thy Truth? The
 eightieth *Psalm* abounds in such Questions,
 and Complaints ground'd upon the same
 motives. *Wilt thou shew wonders to the*
Dead? Shall the Dead arise and praise
thee? Shall thy Loving Kindness be de-
clar'd in the Grave? Or thy faithfulness
in destruction? Shall thy Wonders be
known in the dark, and thy Righteousness
in the land of forgetfulness? As if he
 had said, "Shall I rely on a miraculous
 40 Mercy; and expect that favour, after I
 41 am dead, which thou hast declar'd belongs
 42 only to the Living? Or, can I, when
 43 I am Dead, return hither to live this
 44 Life over again, and lay out a new State
 45 of Tryal better than I did my former?
 46 Or shall I celebrate thy Redemption of
 47 my Soul, when it hath ceas'd to be re-
 48 deemable by any but an *unstatutable* Mer-
 49 cy? Or, if I were capable of being re-
 50 cover'd, after I am once taken from the
 51 Eye of Mortals, and am forgotten by
 52 those who breath upon the Earth, how
 53 shall I be able to publish thy Good-
 54 ness to them?

There

There is another very remarkable passage worth our peculiar notice *Psalms* cxv. 17. *The Heaven, even the Heavens are the Lords: but the Earth hath he given to the Children of Men. The Dead praise not the Lord; neither any that go down into silence. The Heaven of Heavens:* that is, “ the *Higher Heavens* which are “ the mansion and dwelling-place of those “ *fix’d Angels*, who carried themselves dutifully in a State of Tryal, is intirely the “ Lords: All the Inhabitants thereof by an “ excellent *necessity* of *Nature* and *State* “ please the Lord; and are *unchangeably* “ in his favour; and consequently are his “ Subjects, and therefore all Holy Souls “ of Men who live there are so too: *But this Earth hath he given to the Children of Men.* “ He hath put it into their “ power for a while; they may wisely “ *use* or *abuse* their continuance here, as “ they please; and *obey* or *rebell* against “ God: Here they may *forfeit* or *procure* “ his favour. But when this State is left, “ ’tis quite otherwise with them; for those, “ who are in favour with God, cannot forfeit it; but will always please him and “ remain in his favour: So those, who “ then shall be under his Displeasure, shall “ in vain cry for Mercy. *Prayers and*
Halle-

“ *Hallelujahs* from them will no more appease the Wrath of our *Incens'd Saviour*,
 “ than the very *Blasphemies* and Ravings
 “ of *Apostate Angels* after the *General*
 “ Judgment in the *lowest Hell*.

The explication of these *Scriptures* can't reasonably be judg'd *improper*, since they help to clear the Text which hath been chosen for our present improvement, and to confute the groundless fancy of the *Sect* call'd *Soul-sleepers*. There are other methods of exposing that Error; but I reserve them for a place in some other *Contemplations*. This, I hope, may be of some use to rid *weak* Persons minds of this Error, in whom it hath took its rise from a *misapprehension* of the *forecited* Clauses of the *Bible*: for they may seem to favour this monstrous opinion, in the Conceptions of those who are not *Judicious* enough to trace their Connexion with what goes before and follows after the said *places*. But the right observance of the said *Connexion* is the best Key to the true Sense and meaning of them.

In the mean while from the foremention'd explication of this Text it appears, that the plain contents of it is this. *Our entrance into the next State of Souls by Death deprives us of all opportunities of gain.*

gaining and securing the favour of God, if it be not procur'd by Devotion and Penitential Subjection to God before we die. We shall cease to wonder at this, if we consider that the *next* State of Souls is not a State of God's *Original* Institution. According to the Original Plan of the Creator, Creatures intended for *more than one* State could be intended but for *two*: first, for a *State of Tryal*; and after that, for a *State of Recompences* in the same compleat Person and Nature, which they enjoy'd during their State of Tryal: This State of Recompences must be a State of *beatifying rewards*, for the *perseveringly Dutiful* in their *first* World, and a State of *Torture and Punishment* for those that prov'd *finally undutiful* to their Maker in *that* World.

Agreeably hereunto *Angels*, who are *simple Spirits*, were invested with the *Probationary* Capacity of *such* Spirits, in certain limits of *Heaven*, as *their World of Tryal*. When *that* State was expir'd with them, they were judg'd for their behaviour in it: Those who abus'd it, and prov'd *disloyal* to God, were thrown into a State of *Punishment*; and they, who were found *Dutiful*, were advanc'd into an *higher* Heaven, as their *fix'd* State of Rewards?

And

And this fix'd State is a State of *Rewards* and *Punishments*, proper for such *simple* Spirits, because they enjoy the same *intire* Nature in their *last* State which they enjoy'd in their *first*; and wherein they fitted themselves for their *final* Condition.

Thus, according to God's *Original Designation*, *two* and *only two* States were design'd for *us*: first a *State of Probationary Union to Bodies*; and that being expir'd they were to be transplanted into the *fix'd State of embodied Spirits*: Then there would have been no *separate State of humane Souls*. But now, under the dispensation of a *Mediator*, the Sins of penitent Men, tho' they are forgiven, cause a removal of *Souls first*; and of their *Bodies afterwards* into their *unalterable State*: 'Tis thus likewise with *Wicked* men on the account of their *Unforgiven* Guilt, so that, besides the State of Tryal and the State of Recompence assign'd for our Souls united to Bodies, they subsist a while in a State of *separation from Bodies*. This is the beginning of their *unalterable State*, tho' their *Bliss* and *Misery* is not so *perfect* as 'twill be *afterwards*. This makes a considerable difference between the same Souls, even in their *fix'd State of Rewards and Punishments*, *before* and *after* the Resurrection:
For

For now their Souls alone are *Miserable* or *Happy*; tho' they are *unalterably* so: But afterwards their *Bodies too* will either be *tortur'd* for ever, or for ever *Glorious*, as well as their Souls.

Now, whatever wise reasons of *Providence* may in *another Contemplation* be shew'd to be answer'd by God, in appointing this difference in the unalterable State of the Dead, *before* and *after* the Resurrection; 'tis very evident that it was ordain'd, upon the Universal Decay of our Nature, in the offence of our *First Parents*. This *temporary* subsistence of Souls separated from their Bodies, in the beginning of their State of unalterable Bliss or Misery, is *the Creation of Sin*. 'Tis a World founded and built by the Apostacy of *embodied Spirits*: Now, tho' God overrules this *after-purpose* of his own; and orders it for the best to *Holy Souls* in the end; yet, sure *that* World which is the product of *Apostacy*; and in which Our *Original Nature* is lost, to us cannot be a proper State to begin to seek God's favour in it.

The whole of our State, *before* Death, seems to be Compriz'd under the Notion of *a State of Tryal*; and the whole of it *after* Death, under the Notion of an *unalterable State of Recompences*. And as our State
of

of Tryal, tho' 'tis diversified by *Infancy, Youth, Manhood* and other *variations*, is still thro'out a *State of Tryal*: So, tho' our Duration after Death is diversified in its beginning, by our living for a while without Bodies, and being *reunited* to them in the *remoter progress* of it: Yet, the whole of that Duration is a *perpetual unalterable State of recompences*, at *first*, as well as *afterwards*. We can conceive no *Middle Condition* between a State of Tryal and a State of Rewards: neither of these two States can be multiplied. For as the State of Rewards, when once begun, can't be alter'd or ended: So the State of Tryal, when once it is ended, can't be recall'd or repeated. For after that rate the Providence of God would never come to a fix'd and settled Government of those glorious Worlds and Creatures, which he hath made in such a vast and beautiful Variety. If we offer to conceive *several States of Tryal*, or a *Revolution of States of Rewards and States of Tryal*; we split upon *Scepticism* in a matter of the greatest consequence. We can conceive no use of a *second State of Tryal*, but what must belong to the *first*. And they who will abuse, in spite of the most solemn warning, *One State of Tryal*; would in all likelyhood be more presumptuous

ous in a *second* than in a *first*; in hopes of a *third*; and so on in a *ninetyninth*, in hopes of an *hundredth* State of Tryal.

As God hath been pleas'd to ordain *this* to be our *only* State of Tryal, so, by the very change wrought upon our Nature by *Death*, Men are devested of the capacity of *Probationers*. A *Probationary Capacity* implieth in it *an intireness of Nature*: but the separate Souls of Men are possess'd of but *half* of their persons. A *Probationary Capacity* implys in it *the Exercise of Faith*; but the sight of another World removes that Vertue. A *Probationary Capacity* implies in it *a struggle between the Mind and the Body*; and so *a liberty of being sensualized or not*: But absence from the Objects of the Organs of Sense takes away *that* too. A *Probationary State* implies in it *a mixture of pleasures and inconveniences*. But the pleasure or Misery of separate Souls, in proportion to the *receptiveness* of their *imperfect* Nature, is *compleat* and *unmix'd*. A *Probationary Capacity* includes in it *a capableness in bad Men of recovering from a State of Sin and Impenitence*; and *a possibility of Good Mens relapsing from a State of sincere tho' defective and imperfect Holiness*: But that State fixeth Souls, either in an indefectible

ble Holyness; or in an *incurable* malice and viciousness of Mind and Temper.

Since therefore so much depends upon our good use of the present State; How highly doth it behove us to redeem the Time, and to work out our Salvation with all our might? Our present Life is as *brittle* as 'tis *precious*: our *Strength* is not the Strength of *Stones*, nor is our *Flesh* built of *Brass*: Nevertheless, as frail as it is, it is the Vessel which carrieth *Cæsar* and *all his fortunes*: if our Souls miscarry in this short Voyage, they are cast away for ever.

A P P E N D I X.

ST Cyril Bp. of Jerusalem in his exposition of these words, The Dead shall not praise the Lord Ps. 119. v. 17. was clearly of this Mind for he thus explains it. Τὸτο δηλοῖ, ὅτι τῇ μετάνοιᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀφέσει ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ μόνον τὴν θεοσμίαν ἐκέσθῃ, ἐφ' ἣ καὶ οἱ ἀπολαύοντες αἰνέσασί σε, ἐκέτι μὲν δάναλον λοιπὸν τῆς ἐν ἁμαρτίας τελευτήσαντας ὡς εὐεργετηθέντας αἰνεῖν, ἀλλὰ ἀποδύρεσθαι· ἐστὶ γὰρ αἶνος μὴ τῇ εὐχαριστούντων· ὁδυρμὸς δὲ τῇ μασιζομένων· οἱ μὲν ἐν δίκαιοι τότε αἰνεῖσιν, οἱ δὲ τελευτήσαντες ἐν ἁμαρτίας, καὶ γὰρ λοιπὸν ἐξομολογήσεως οὐκ ἔχουσιν. This passage of Scripture plainly

plainly declares, that the Season of Repentance and Remission of Sins is circumscribed within the bounds of this Life, in which they, who make a good use of it, will praise thee [O God] with great advantage: But in the Remainder of their Duration after Death, they who have died in their Sins can no longer praise God with any benefit by so doing; for Praise is the Work of Thankful and Rejoicing Persons; not of those who Weep and Wail whilst they are scourg'd and punish'd for their Sins: The Righteous then do praise God; but they, who have died in their Sins, have then no opportunity of exercising either a Repentance, or a Gratitude that will be accepted: Now is the acceptable season of true Christian Exomologesis; whether we take it in the Sense of Confessing our Sins; or in the other of singing praises to the Glory of God; Now therefore let us glorify God, by publishing our own faults and his undeserved Mercies towards us: for by this means we shall have no Guilt to Confess in the next World, but Hallelujahs will be our whole employment for ever and ever

The Dignity of Souls and Pastors.

SERMON XVI.

PREACH'D at a

VISITATION,

Held at

St. MICHAEL'S Church in CAMBRIDGE,

Oct. the 6. 1715.

The BISHOP.

Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, Quietness, Peace and Love among all Christian People; and especially among them that are, or shall be committed to your charge? .

Answer

I will so do, the Lord being my Helper.

See the Office for the Ordination of Priests.

To the Right Worshipful

RICHARD BENTLEY D.D.

*ARCH-DEACON of ELY, and Master
of TRINITY-College in Cambridge.*

REVEREND SIR,

SINCE I have been wrought up to so high a pitch of *Vanity*, as to Publish a *Volume of Sermons*, some *Reverend Brethren*, who had *subscribed* for the *Impression*, desired me to find room for *this Discourse*.

Being now *capable* of any *Presumption*, I resolv'd to *grace* it with your Name before it, as soon as ever I was prevail'd on to *Print* it: and this I do with the *less* concern, because your readiness to encourage a spirit of *Industry* in the *Meaneſt* of your Clergy; and your

X 2

courteous

courteous Reception of us, on all occasions, confirm me in an *old* Persuasion, that the Greatest *Criticks*, and most *Universal* Scholars, make the fairest allowances for the defects of the *Inferior* Classes of *Writers*.

These on the contrary, being Men of *size*, compar'd with the οἱ πολλοὶ (who were always Enemies to the *Excellent*) are apt to be infected with *Zoilism* and to vent their *Envy* in some hasty *Remarks* on the Works of *Great* Men.

I am very free to own my self one of the *lower* Class of *Authors*, and for that reason subject to a *tincture* of *Arrogance*, arising from too good an opinion of my self; but I hope, I am so far upon my guard against the *largest* share of it, as to be clear of that *horrible Malevolence* which reigns among the *Retailers* of *Four-peny Learning*. I will not say that there never was such a thing as a *good Pamphlet*; but most performances of that kind are so *Satyri-
cal*

cal that I think it a *dangerous* enterprize, in a Man who is *Conscious* to himself, of a *true English-Man's* common share of *Good Nature*, to attempt to write one.

But of all the *Pamphlets* I ever read, I never saw more *Insolence* than in a late performance, which takes Dr. BENTLEY to task: Here is a *Magno Promissor biatu* with a witness, but what is become of the *Performer*? If the *Author* of it be a *Dissenting Minister*, as it is confidently affirm'd, he ought to have conniv'd at some *False Criticisms* (supposing they could have been found) in a Sermon against *Popery*, at *that juncture* of Time: However, I wonder at no instance of *inconsistent* Conduct at a time when Jesuits infest the Land, under the *Disguise* of all *Professions*.

He abounds in *spiteful accusations*, which I shall pass by in *this* place. However, since, *Sir*, he falls upon you, in the *last* page of his *Remarks*, for not saying some things, which he judg'd to

be proper on that *occasion*; in order to remove his *Surprise*, and the surprise of others, who may be seduced by his scurrilous *misrepresentation* of the *Arch-Deacon* of *Ely*; I think it my Duty to repeat my Thanks to you for the excellent Charge which you made upon the Day when this *Sermon* was deliver'd; and more *particularly* for that part of it, wherein you made *ample* and *affectionate* mention of our *Gracious* Sovereign KING GEORGE, of his Noble Present to the *University*, and of his *kind* and *Condescensive* Reception of those who attended the Throne with Thanks for it.

The *foremention'd* Charge (considering who were present when you spoke it) could not be unknown, either to that *venerable* Body, or to the whole *County*; and since it was given but a very short time before the vth. of *November* following; any thing in it might be very inoffensively omitted before an *Audience*

dience not fond of *Tautologies*; and in a *Sermon* so full of *Matter*; and which withal was penn'd intirely against *Pope-ry*, when it was thought an Act of Courage to attack it so *smartly*, as you have done. One that could do all this can't *justly* be suspected to want a *true* affection for KING GEORGE, or to expect any share of the *Pretender's* favour.

Sir, I hope, these *ungrateful* returns from a *Protestant* hand, for that excellent Discourse, will not discourage you from carrying on any of your useful designs; and shall always pray for the *prolongation* of a Life so formidable to *Atheism*, *Scepticism*, *Licentious Thinking*, *Popery*, and all the Enemies of the *Establish'd Church of England*; and with most sincere and Dutiful respect do subscribe my self.

Honored SIR, Your most

Obedient Humble Servant

DANIEL STURMY.

HEB. XIII. + 17.

— They Watch for your Souls. —

OUR Souls are our Selves; and yet how little do we know of them? Curiosity carries Men a great way in other inquiries; but as nearly as we are interested in this Subject, we bestow but little thinking upon it: and so we know less of the principal part of our Person, than otherwise we might. For let Men be as loud as they please upon the obscurity of the Subject, and their want of Capacity to attain to a Satisfactory view of a Spirit, 'tis certain that their Ignorance in this particular is more owing to their own inadvertence, and preposterous Conduct of Thought, than to any want of means for such a sight of the Soul, as might suffice to make them careful above all things, to improve it in Understanding and Goodness here, and to render their Salvation sure hereafter.

Whilst Souls are join'd to Bodies sown in corruption, weakness and dishonour, they are like so many Princes travelling abroad in disguise: Till we converse with them,
their

their *Majesty* is hid, and so they meet not with that *Respect* which is due. *Strangers* have mean *Notions* of them, nor concern themselves much about them; and sometimes are rude in their behaviour towards them. Were not this the Case, how could they possibly be overseen by the more numerous part of Mankind? For, is it not hence that the *Interests* of the *Body* are pursued with such *inordinate* care, and the *cultivation* of the *Soul* is so shamefully neglected? Is it not hence that they are *nothing* upon the *Tongues* of the *Profane*? Is it not hence that they are *Slaves* to *Ignoble* and *Criminal* passions, in the *Conversation* of the *Multitude*, whose whole Life, with regard to their notice of their Souls, is like a long tedious train of *Dreams*? What *Strange* opinions have there been advanced in all *Ages* of the World about their *Original*, their *Nature*, *Subsistence* and *Duration*? In the Writings of some *Philosophers* they have been *Fire* and *Air*; *Wind* and *Vapour*; *Harmony* and *Number*; *Blood* or the finest *efflorescences* of it; a *diffusive quality* of the *Body* arising from all the *Organs* thereof; *gross matter* in the *Ground-work* of their Being, that is dissolved and dissipated at the *dissolution* of the *Body*. In the writings of others they have

have been made *parts* and *ὑποστάσεις* of *God*; of the same substance with him and necessarily existent from all Eternity: In some *Authors* they have been traduced from the Seed of *Parents*: In the works of others they have been represented as *Descendants* from another World, in which they formerly lived, and necessarily *Immortal*, without the favour of *Deity* to support them in *existence*. How could Men possibly have been such *Moles* and *Batts* in the Study of their own *Nature* and *Conscious Principle*, if they had imploy'd their *Reason* without *Prejudice*, and with a great deal of *Care*, and had begg'd the assistance of the *Author of their Being* for an *exact-er* Knowledge of themselves? They could never have shot so wide of their *mark*, and run into such opposite extremes, if they had took the best course, which even *unenlightened Nature* might have pointed out to them. Men must not look *abroad* for their Souls: *Heaven, Earth* and *Sea* say with one voice, *they are not in me: These are within*, and their own *operations* are the best *Glasses* that can be used to represent them with *Life* and *Lustre* to our observation: Books themselves, tho' *Inspired*, can't give us an *affecting* account of them, till we have descended into the *Conscious Deep*.

Deep, and carefully traced the *order* and *actings* of our *thinking* Power

Reflexion is the only *Limner* that can draw a *Mind* to the *Life*, and shew a *Spirit* in the most *moving* Colours; and a *Just* resemblance of those *Complexions* of *Temper*, and those various *sorts* and *proportions* of *Genius*, which *discriminate* one *Soul* from another: *Animi Bonum Animus inveniat*: as *Seneca* well observes. The *Mind* is the best *Judge* of its *own* *Treasures*: By weighing in our *Reflexions* the properties of *Thought*, the amazing *swiftness* of its *course*, the piercing *force* of its *researches*, and the vast *extent* of its *influences*, we might, without being beholden to the *subtilities* of the *Schools*, most *convincingly* discern *Body* and *Mind* to be intirely different and clearly distinct from one another. Some *properties* and *motions* of the *Mind* are *inconsistent* with the *Laws* and *Properties* of *Matter*; and cannot be reconciled to the usual properties of *Body*; and therefore we cannot allow the *substance* and *ground-work* of the *Mind* to be *Matter*, whenever we compare the *activity* of our *Minds* with the *motions* of *Matter*. *Matter* cannot possibly furnish out *Springs* so *fine* and *forcible*, as the *operations* of our *Minds* require for their *flight* and *performances*.

To

To say nothing *now* of those Acts of *Faith* and *Divine desires*, by which the *Souls* of *Devout* Christians take hold of *Celestial* Mansions before-hand: give me leave to ask, can the *Reason* of an *Astro-nomer*, whilst he is measuring the *circumference* of the *Heavenly* Bodies, calculating their *Number*, and describing their *distance* with their respective *Situations* and *Motions*, be allowed no sort of *presence* among those *Heavenly* Bodies, only because his *Exterior* Person is here below? If this cannot be allowed, whence comes it to pass, that, during some Noble *Abstractions* of *Mind*, the *Souls* of *some* Men have not felt those *painful* Sensations, which usually attend *certain Impressions*, made upon their *Bodies* at other times? *This* was the case of *Archimedes* in an Interval of *Intense Geometrical* thinking; and this was the Case of the *Martyrs* and *Confessors* in every Age of the *Christian* Dispensation, when they found in themselves, in spite of *violent* efforts against their *Bodies*, *extraordinary* emotions of *ardour* towards God. * By what power can *Matter* be present in *two* Places at once? and yet (tho' it is a *Paradox* and a *Riddle* in *Sound*) our *Souls*,

* Nihil Crux sentit in Nervo, quum Animus est in caelo. Tertull. ad Martyres.

in *some* Acts of the Mind may be said to, be here below in our *Bodies* and as high as the *Highest Heavens* at the *same* time. Granting there may be *finer effluvia* of Matter, that like our *Thoughts* can fly faster than the *Wind*, or the *Rays* of *Light*; yet, how should such *small* particles of Matter hold the *Sun* within themselves without being burnt; or the *whole Sea* without being drowned? For can that portion of Matter which is *contained* be greater than that portion of Matter which *doth contain* it? But the *Mind*, in its *Conceptive* Acts, may very properly be said to *contain* the Subjects which it *apprehendeth* and *understands*. Wherefore the *Mind* by its *contrary* operations, in its Acts of *Knowledge* to the *Laws* of *Matter*, must be somewhat in the ground-work of its Being and *Principle* *superior* to it.

And as the *Soul* hath a *presence*, *agility* and *motion peculiar* to it self, *independent* upon *Body*, and *inconsistent* with its having any such thing as *Matter* in the *foundation*, *frame* and *texture* of its Substance; so it glorieth in a sort of *Beauty*, *Health*, *Dexterity*, *Strength*, *Posterity* and *Durability* which doth not belong to the *Body*: For the *Soul* only is the seat of *Innocence* and *Guilt*; of *Faith* and *Hope*; of *Desire* and

Enjoyment; of Love and Hatred; of Invention and Progress in any sort of Skill: The Soul only is capable of Devotion for God, Love for ones Country and Benevolence for our Neighbour. The Resolutions of the Soul are the Source and Fountain of all the free and arbitrary actions of the Body: By a right or wrong use of these Capacities, and a greater or lesser improvement of them, Souls become beautiful or deform'd; healthy or sickly, strong or weak; more or less flourishing in mental Goods and real advantages; or do degenerate and fall into a State of Spiritual Adversity. The Body is evidently corruptible in its Stamina, and design'd for a Grave; But the Soul hath presages of Immortality, and seeks for another Country after Death. The Soul is the Seat of Conscience, subject to Eternal and Divine Laws; and condemns or approves its own inward Temper and outward Conduct, in proportion to the conformity they both bear to the Divine Laws, or their Declension from them. All these Capacities place Mind in a Sphere of Beings, which it is transcendently beyond the Power of Matter to produce. Mind, being susceptible of all this, must needs be a substance more like its Maker than our Body can be allowed to be:

be: Whether we consider the vast influences of *Genius* in the subtle *Mæanders* of the *Understanding*; or of *Grace* and *Holiness* upon the motions of the *Will* and the *tenour* of our *Conversation*, we must be forced to own some *strictures* of *Divinity* both in the *Substance* and *Form* of the *Mind*. This well considered doth not only prove *Mind* to be above *Matter*; but also that *some* *Minds* are as much *superior* to *others* as one *Star* is to another in *Glory*. How fruitful is *Genius* in its diversified *Streams* of *Invention* in different *Souls*? How *wonderful*, and how *beneficial* are the *Products* of this *Fruitfulness* and *Variety* of *Contrivance*? Whence should we have come by a *thousand* *Instruments*, and *Arts* and *Conveniencies* which we now enjoy without them? Would *mere Matter* have supplied us with them? Would our *Magnificent Temples*, *Colleges*, *Hospitals* and *stately Palaces* ever have appeared among us, if there had been no *Genius* to *Design*? Would the *Hands* of the *Workmen* which built them have rear'd them in those *beautiful* *Forms*, without a *Principle of Thought* to follow the *Rules* prescribed them? or would that *Capacity* of theirs, which was sufficient to *follow* *Rules*, have produc'd the *Rules* they followed, unless some
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Superiour Sagacity had furnish'd them with a *Judicious* Plan for that purpose? Or can we think that the *Hand* of the *Artist*, and that Principle of Thought in the *Architect* which prepar'd the *Draught*, are of the same material Nature?

Again, how *bright* and *august* doth the *Soul* appear, when well-gifted in the *Orb* of *Government*? Who can enough admire the Power of *Thought* in the Administration of *Empires* of a *Portentous* extent? When the *Wisdom* and *Benign* care of some *single* Mind keeps *Myriads* of its *Fellow-creatures* in Dutiful awe and Subjection; and vast *Provinces* rejoyce in a free *Circulation* of Blessings; so that no one feels any uneasiness in their *Political* Capacity upon any account, but that their *Sovereign* is *Mortal*. Can we think that the *brave* Principle of Being, which is equal to such cares, and that hath a fund of *Wisdom* and *Beneficence*, large enough to *awe* the *Seditious*; to encourage *Goodness*; to animate *Merit* of all sorts, by an impartial Distribution of Rewards to the *Excellent* of the Earth, and to *observe* and *execute* all those commendable Rules of Governing, which secure the *Tranquillity* of the *People* and the Stability of the *Throne*, by fastning the *Subjects hearts* to their *Ruler*, can possibly

bly be *meer Matter*? No: Be it how it will with the *Body* (which, it must be confessed, may say to the *Worm* thou art my *Sister*, and to *Corruption* thou art my *Mother*) 'tis certain that the *Soul*, which is able to do all this, had neither an *Amorite* for its *Father* nor an *Hittite* for its *Mother*. Characters of this stamp shew the true *Grandeur* of the Mind; they not only shine in *History* upon *Earth's future* as well as *present* Generations, calling them blessed; but they enlarge the Soul with *Joy*, and open large Fields of *Glory* to them from *God* and *Angels* in *Heaven*. In short, *God* is the *Father* of all *Spirits*; and *there is a Spirit in Man*; and nothing under the *Inspiration of the Almighty* can endue him with such a *Compass of Understanding*.

If we, who enjoy the *Gospel*, can believe a *Thinking Substance* to be *matter* in its *Principle*, or *Mortal* in the *decrees* of *Heaven*: The *Brachmans* will rise up in Judgment against us, for both *Strabo* and *Clement of Alexandria* assure us that they were fully persuaded, that *Death* was but a passage into a *new Life*. *Cæsar* relates the same thing of the *Druids*. Your *Spinozists* and other Tribes of *Atheists*, who are allied to them, seem to be a sort of *Rosicru-*

ficrucian Alchymists in thinking: they seek for the *Soul* where it can't be found. They who flatter *discerpible substance* to so high a degree, as to suppose it capable of *Genius*, *Oeconomy* and *Policy*, are Guilty of the same *Vanity* as the Kings of *Mexico* are at their *Coronation*, when they make themselves no less *Responsible* for what is *not* in their own power, than for what is so: for they undertake not only for their being examples of an *upright Government*, but for the continuance of the *Light* of the *Sun*, of *Rain* from the *Clouds*, of the *regular circuit* of *Rivers*, and *fruitful* Seasons. Undoubtedly a good King who fears God, eschews *Evil*, loves his *People*, and hates *Covetousness*, is an *inestimable* blessing, like the *tender Dew* which falls kindly upon the Grass, in the *issues* of his *gracious Administration*: But, I can't conceive, how that which *thus* vyes with *Sun* and *Sea*, in diffusing blessings, should be compounded of Matter, as *Dew*, and *Stars* and *Meteors* are: 'Tis *too great* a task for *Matter* to lay the Interest of *Nations* and *Posterities* to heart; to hold the balance *even* between *potent* Kingdoms, and to be contriving for the Good of *innumerable* Souls, that they may serve God with all *desirable* quiet. Great *effects* and their *Causes* must surely be
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be somewhat less *disproportionable* than such a *supposition* would represent them.

The *Wisdom* of the *Understanding* is an *excellent* thing: but *Holiness*, which is the *Wisdom* of the *Will*, is more excellent than that. By this the *Soul* doth display its highest *Beauty* and *Power*. For the *Graces* which adorn the *inner* shine forth in the *Vertues* of the *outer* Man. *Self-denial* and the *rational* restraint of our sensual *Passions*; and suffering *unjust* Contempt and Calumny for doing our Duty, do not only shew the *Courage* and *Dominion* of the Soul, but do also preserve the *Health*, the *Strength* and *Comeliness* of the Body: For *Temperance*, *Chastity* and *Diligence* in our Calling are great friends to and Preservatives of the good State of our Bodies. A Man of a *fair* and *Heavenly* temper of Mind will shew it in such a *regular* way of Living, as is Consistent with the Dignity of *Humane* Nature. A Lover of God discovers the *greatness* of his Mind by the *Noble* strain of his *Desires*. A *Zeal* in our *selves* to honour God, and to see him glorified by *others*, is a proof of a Spirit of *true* Ambition: for the praise of God is the highest Honour. *Heavenly* Passions give us such strength to resist Temptations, to subdue the Body, to despise the World, to be *meek*

when we are *affronted*, and *chearful* tho' we are *poor* and *despised*, and to be *resigned* to all the *disposals* of *Providence*, that they can't but enlarge the Mind which is actuated by them and renew the Image of God in it. He who makes it the *Scope* of his Life not only to do no *harm*, but to do all the *good* he can both to *himself* and *others*, must be animated by a greater Spirit than him that is in the World, and rules in the Children of Disobedience. Such a Man hath no occasion to shake off the reproaches of his own Mind by excess of Wine, or other vicious avocations; for the testimony of a *good Conscience* is a Sanctuary in *Adversity*, and extracts a kind of pure and delicate pleasures out of his *Prosperity*, which are far beyond those *feculent* delights which arise from the *use* or *increase* of *Wine* and *Oyl*: But can we think that when the *Mind* Crucifieth the *Flesh* and the *Lusts* thereof, that *only* Matter is subdued by *Matter*? Can *Matter* delight it self in God? Can *Matter* form *Schemes* for taking the *Kingdom of Heaven* by *violence*? Can *Matter* triumph for Joy in Prospect of *Immortality*? No: *Such* aims and Desires are out of its reach; that which is *earthly* is from the *Earth*; but the *Heavenly* part of Man which was breathed into him by *God*, is of

a *substance* as much Nobler than that of the *Body*, as is its *extraction*.

Something having been said upon *Souls*, I come now to shew the *usefulness* and *necessity* of God's having instituted an *order* of Men to *preside* over them, to *direct* and *govern* them in their pursuit of their *Eternal* Interests: for so in an *Oriental Sense* Men are said to *watch over Souls*: from what hath been said we may see that (tho' the *Pens* of some, and the *Lives* of others, do degrade them so low as to level them with *breath* and *trifles*) *thinking substances* appear to be very *valuable* and *considerable* Beings; for to them we owe *Letters*, *Laws*, *History*, *Arts* and *Sciences*: they were Created by the *immediate* hand of God, and purchased by the inestimable Blood of his Dear Son: To *govern* them *well* will quickly appear to be a work as *laborious*, as the *Office* and *Trust* committed to us for that purpose is most certainly *honorable*: And it is for the sake of the great Consequence of our *success*, and upon the account of the *difficulties* we meet with, in the *faithful* discharge of our Duty, that so much *Honour* is commanded to be paid to them; for my *Text* is brought as a *Reason* why our *People* and several *Charges* should pay a singular *deference* to the *Clergy* in general, but principally

pally to their own *Pastors*; obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an account.

Let us see then how *Souls* stand in need of *Watchmen*, considered in their Capacity of *Understanding* in general.

2dly. In their Capacity of *Genius* in particular.

3dly. In their Capacity of *Passions*.

4thly. In their Capacity of *Resolution*.

Now, *First*, if *Souls* be considered in their Capacity of *Understanding* in general, *spiritual Watchmen* will appear very useful and necessary; for *Speculative Knowledge* of all sorts requires much *leisure* to work it out of our own *thinking*; and *Practical Knowledge* is the Daughter of much *exercise* and *Experience*: besides *Divine Knowledge* comes slower than any; for the *corruptness* of our *Birth* alienates our Minds from a desire of *sanctifying Truths*. For these reasons it is very necessary that there should be a *succession* of Men, called *Priests* or *Presbyters*, to preserve Knowledge of this sort, and to *dispense* it to the *People* seeking it from their *Lips*. For tho' indeed the Scriptures are translated into the *Mother Languages* of most Nations, and 'tis better that the *illiterate* part of the

Laity

Laity should read the *Bible* in *Translations*, than have it wholly lock'd up from them: Yet, an *Order* of Men, whose business it is wholly to study this Book, are too necessary to explain it: For besides that the Writings of the *Old* and *New Testament* are indited in *Learned Languages*, (which tho' they are only two in *Character* are *many more* in their *idioms*) it ought to be considered that they were given to the *Church* in *different Ages* of the World; and *allude* to the *Customs* of very remote *Nations* as well as *Times*: Some passages of them will puzzle the most *Skilful* perusers; and others are to be explain'd by decrees of Providence, the execution whereof is still *future*, and may possibly be at a *very great distance* from our own *Age*: Now if with *all* the helps, which by the labours of the *Clergy* we do enjoy, many passages of the *sacred Book* cannot yet be understood: How *useless* a Book would the *best of Books* prove without such an *Interpreter*, as St. *Philip* was to the *Ethiopian*? Moreover, not only *hard Scriptures* have been wrested by men *to their own destruction*, but sometimes the *plainest* have been distorted by *false Glosses*. A great *Depravity* of Temper has pester'd the *Christian Church*, by some of its *professed Members*

bers in all times: There have always been several sorts of *Heretics* and *Seducers*. The *Writings* of all the Fathers shew it to be matter of Fact: their *Apologies*; their *Pareneses* and *Protreptics*; their *Commentaries* and *Epistles* are full of the complaints of the disturbance, which *Hereticks* gave the Church, and do administer *Antidotes* against them. St. *Ireneus* liv'd in one of the *earliest* Ages of the Church, and yet what a frightful *Catalogue* of *Heresies* doth he give us? How much *Vexation* did the *Nestorians* and *Eutychians* give *Theodoret*, and St. *Hilary* of *Sardinia*? *Novatus* and *Novatianus* to St. *Cyprian*? *Apollinaris* and the *Arrians* to St. *Basil* of *Cesarea*? the *Eunomians* and *Montanists* to St. *Chrysostom*? the *Manichees* and *Donatists* to St. *Austin*? and *Pelagius* to St. *Jerome*? But above all, what a *Theatre* to God, to *Angels*, and to *Men* was the *Great Athanasius* in his astonishing Conflicts, when the *Christian* World was overflow'd with an *Arrian* Deluge; and *Orthodoxy* swam for its Life, and hardly kept its *Chin* above Water? When we read the *Life* of that great *Champion* for the *Faith*, how do we one while find our *Fears* engaged, another while our *Hopes*, and at all Times our *Admiration*! *Vanini*, *Bernardinus*, *Ochinus* and

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Servetus, were fatal Instances of Men dying *Bigots* even to *Blasphemy*. And now let any one Judge, whether, if there had not been *Bishops* and *Priests* of an *Athanasian Spirit*, it would not have been much worse with the *Church* than it is. If in spite of all those *labours of Love*, by which the *brightest Lights* of the *Church* did earnestly contend for the *Faith* once deliver'd to the *Saints*, *Heterodoxy* hath ever been very *Insolent*, how would the Flock of *Christ* have been worried by *Wolves in Sheeps clothing*, and have been carried away by the divers and strange *Doctrines* of those who Study to *pervert* the *Simple* and unwary, provided *God* had left them as *Orphans* destitute of *spiritual Fathers*? Happy therefore is it for *this Church* which so abounds in *Scribes*, instructed with *Treasures of Learning* both *New* and *Old*, to enable them to divide the *Word* with Skill, to the edification of all Capacities, in order to fit them for *the Kingdom of Heaven*.

2dly. If *Souls* be consider'd in a Capacity of *Genius*, *Spiritual Watchmen* will appear to be very *useful* and necessary. Persons *Sacred* by their *Function*, when they visit the *Families* committed to their Charge, among other good Offices, may be of use to the *Heads* of them by giving their Judgment

ment for what sort of *Callings* their *Children* seem to be best dispos'd and qualified: and if *Parents* could be prevail'd upon to take their *Counsel*, there would not be so many *Drones* and awkward fellows in all sort of *Vocations* as there are. But whether *Professors* of any *Art* or *Science* have been brought up by the *Directions* of *Genius* or not, in the choice of their *Constant* employment, the *Sacred Order* are certainly very serviceable, whenever, by their *Public* Doctrine or *Private* persuasion, they make those who are under their Care *Diligent* in their several *Professions*: For if they are employed in any *Art* wherein they find *Genius* wanting to themselves, *Affiduity* is necessary with a witness to make them tolerably serviceable to themselves and to their Families: and if they have a *Genius* to whatever *Art* they do *profess*, Diligence will make them *excellent* and possibly strike out some *Invention* for which the World may be indebted to them: *Seest thou a Man diligent in his business? he shall stand before Kings; he shall not stand before mean Men.*

By promoting Mens *Diligence* in their own *Callings*, *Ministers* do very much oblige the *Community* to which they belong; for generally they who are *negligent* of
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their own *Calling* are *pretenders* to Skill in every other Man's: No *neighbourhood* can be *quiet* for them: They are downright *Pests* in the State, not only as they are *Cyphers* in their own *sphere* at home, but also by being very *Pragmatical* abroad.

aliena negotia curo
Excussus propriis,

is these Mens *Motto*, if they deserve any. If their *Hands* were more *active*, their *Tongues* would be more at rest: For the Nature of *Man* is of course *active*; if it be not *so* wherein it *ought*, it will be *active* wherein it *ought not to be so*. An *Idle* person *Censures Things* and *Performances* which he doth not *understand*. His very *Impertinence* is dreadful to the *Peaceable* and the *Discreet*. But that *Malevolence* which doth as constantly haunt *Envy* as *Envy* doth *Sloth*, is far more *formidable* to all that lie in his way. *Conversation* formerly was *improving* and *delightful*; but now *solitude* and *silence* seem to be the only *Refuge* from those *Incendiaries*, who are always sowing *Discord* among Members of the same *Church* and *Monarchy*. In the Days of St. *Paul* *Knowledge* puff'd Men up: But in our Days *Ignorance* seems
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to have got the start of it in this particular; for with what *effrontery* do some *despicable Medlers* speak; and how *arrogant* do they look, whilst they talk of the Decrees of *Church and State*? One would be tempted to think that they were apprehensive that *Wisdom* was in danger of dying with *them*; and that *Thrones, Senates and Synods* stood trembling before the *Bar* of their *Judgment*. How often must *these Men* be told that it is a great *Sin* and *Presumption* to *despise Dominions*, and to *speak evil of Dignities*? How often must they be told that, supposing the *Ark of God* did *totter*, the hands of *Uzzah* must not pretend to support it. *In the Multitude of Counsellors there is safety*, but in Counsellors from the *Multitude Political* dictates are perfectly *eccentric*: Such a *Process* hath a natural tendency to *Riots, Tumults, Insurrections, Confusion* and every *Evil word and work*. *Calumny* now is not the Arrow that flies *in the Dark*, but it annoys us at *Noon-Day*. The old *Athenians* erected a *Temple* to its Honour and ador'd it, and if it proceeds much farther in its Triumphs over the *best* persons, I am afraid the *Enemies* of our *Sion* will be tempted to do the same thing. Wherefore, how *delightful* and how *useful* are the *Clergy* of that *Land*, from whom

whom you hear so many Exhortations to *Peace* and *Loyalty*? How heartily do they pray that there may be no *Achan* in the *State*, nor *Elymas* in the *Church*? And yet may not God Expostulate with us, *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no Physician there, why then is not the health of the Daughter of my people recover'd?*

Thirdly, If *Souls* be consider'd in their Capacity of *Passions* and *Affections*, *Sacred Officers* are very useful and necessary: For how apt are the People to run in a full Stream of *Passion* towards the *folly* and *vanities* and *enjoyments* of the *World*, and to neglect the *Heavenly Light of Reason*, and the *Gospel* which shews them the *narrow path* that leads to *Happiness*. For this reason it is necessary, in order to their having the *whole Will of God* declared to them, that *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, here a little and there a little* should be press'd upon them, *in season and out of season*, to persuade them for their *everlasting Good*. The *Promises* of the *Gospel* should be set before them to encourage their *Hopes*; the *Goodness of God* to inflame their *Love*; the *Joys of Heaven* ought to be as it were *painted* in our *Discourses* to raise their *Emulation*; and the

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terrors of Hell described with such Life, as to fix their *Reverential* fear upon God, and breed in them an abhorrence of those Sins, the wages whereof is everlasting Death? But alas what *Talents* of our own *acquiring* are sufficient to *Establisb* the hearts of our *Hearers* in *Grace*? We must not depend upon our *selves*: But as our *Office* is from God; so must our *sufficiency* be from him, to make us *able* and *faithful* Dispensers of his *Word* and *Sacraments*: Our *Success* too must be from him, for God giveth the *increase*. We must *pray* for our *People* fervently both night and Day: We must have a great Zeal for their *Spiritual* Proficiency. We must beseech the *Impenitent* to be reconciled unto God, and spur on the Faithful to be always abounding in good works. We must strive with *Meekness* to *recover* them who are *out of the way*; *bind up* the *wounds* of the *broken-hearted*; comfort the feeble-minded; to the *Weak* become *Weak*, and *all things* to *all Men*, that we may gain *some*. For *He that winneth Souls is wise*: they will sometimes hold a long *Siege* against the *Charitable* endeavours of the *Charmer*, charm he never so wisely. However, the *worst* of them desire our *Assistance* at the last gasp: then we can express our *Compassion*,
but

but with as *faint* an *hope*, as they seek our *Help*. When the *Soul* of the *Sensualist* draws nigh unto *Death*, how desirable is the *Lord's Messenger*, tho' he be but *one of a thousand*? But alas what availeth it to cry *Solon Solon*, when mens *Consciences* are sing'd with the *flames of Hell*?

Fourthly, If the *Souls* of Men be consider'd in their capacity of *Resolution*, by which the *outward Conduct* of Mens Lives is *influenced*, the *Sacred* will appear very *useful* and *necessary*. The *best* times seem to be reserv'd till the Power of *Discipline* shall be restor'd to the *Clergy*: For *Ministers* are to *warn* the *unruly*. 'Twas given in charge to the *Prophet Ezekiel*, the *Watchman* over the *House of Israel*. *Ez. III. 17. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him no warning to save his Life, the same wicked Man shall die in his Iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.* *Lactantius* and other *ancient Writers* made a *Noble* challenge in behalf, of the *Christian ministrations*. "Bring a *Drunkard*, we will make him *Sober*; a *Lascivious Person* and he shall become *Chast*; *Vicious* persons shall become *Virtuous*; and every one be cleansed of his *Spiritual Leprosy*. The *Spirit of Christ* (for God who gave
success

success to their Ministry, is not wanting to the *Church* in After-ages) is still able and ready to assist the Governours of *Religious* assemblies in their *Baptisms*, *Confirmations*, *Preaching*, *Conversation* and *Conferences* with their *People*, and in their *public* and *private Absolutions*, and *Dispensations* of the *Body* and *Blood* of *Christ*: For these are all *Means of Grace* appointed by *God*, with a design to make men *Holy*, and for the perfecting of the *Saints*. *Happy* therefore is it for the *People* of *this* Land, who are so well instructed by thousands that labour in the *Word* and *Doctrine*, able to convince *Gainfayers*, lovers of *Hospitality* and *Lovers of Good Men*; Men that take heed both to themselves and to their *Doctrine* and do continue so to do: And how should they do *otherwise*, who give themselves up wholly to *Reading* and to *Meditation*? Why should they despair of saving both themselves and those that hear them, who are such *attractive* examples to *Believers* in *Word*, in *Conversation* in *Charity*, in *Spirit*, in *Faith* and *Purity*? There must be something of the *Magnet* at least in *good* Communications, since those that are *Evil* are too well known to corrupt *good Manners*. *Shining* Lights, we trust, will be *burning* Lights, and *warm* others

others with the *same* Love of God which is *kindled* in their *own* Souls.

To *release* your *Patience*, by what hath been said the *Sacred* order appear to be Men of an *useful* and *honorable* Class, from the *value* of the *Souls* committed to their *Charge*, and from the *singular* endowments requir'd for the *full* discharge of the *Duties* of their *Ministry*. The *Censorship* among the *Romans* was reckon'd the *Crown* of all *Offices*, because it had the oversight of the *Citizens* *Morals*; insomuch that *Cicero* demanded it *ten* years after he had been *Consul*. And he *himself* preferred the *xii* *Tables* before all the *Libraries* in the whole World upon the same account: How much more reason have *Christians* to set an high value upon the *Bible*, and those *Stewards* who are entrusted with the *Keys*, which alone can unlock the *Mysteries* that are contained in it? Wherefore all *reasonable* *Reverence* must be due from the People to those *Officers* in a Christian Community, who are *Preservers* of the *Faith* and *Helpers* of your *Joy*; promoters of the *Public* *Tranquillity*, by promoting *Peace* and *Subjection*, *Benevolence* and *Industry* in their *Country*: all their Study and their most earnest desire is to stir up Men to be wise for *Time* and for *Eternity*, by being *Sober*,
Z Chaste,

Chaste, Temperate, Liberal, Meek, Humble and Devout. The *enlightening* Mens understandings, the *regulating* their *passions*; and the *reforming* their *manners* is a work that makes them *honorable* in the sight of God. What *Enemies* then are they to *Heaven* and *Earth*, to *Society* and to *themselves* who *malign* and *misrepresent* them? Is it fitting that every little Person, who conceits himself to be a Wit should be suffer'd to shed their *Venom* with their *Ink* upon them? Is it fitting that they should be defrauded of their *Dues* who deserve *double Honour*? How much better were it for the Nation, if all the *Laity* of the Land did *esteem* them for their *Works* sake; and submit to the *Guides* of *Souls*; treasuring up their *Instruction* in their *Heart* and *Memory*; pity their *frailties*, and cover them with a *Veil*; comply with all the *Rules* prescribed to our *observance* in *public Assemblies*; *consult* them in *Doubts* and *Scruples*; and not leave *Communication* without consulting us, whenever they are attack'd, before they do it, nor till the *Sophisms* of their *Seducers* are as hard for their *Pastors*, as it may be for them to answer: pay then all that the *Law* allows; and *more* where *Sacrilege* hath left such *poor Gleanings*, that not only *Frugality* but
even

even *Mortification* it self cannot subsist upon them. Thus in honouring them, they would honour the Lord with their substance, and with the first fruits of all their increase.

In saying these things, we may seem to Preach our selves, but we indeed Preach your selves; for it is your interest, the interest of your *Immortal* Souls, that we should discharge the Duties of our Office with Joy and not with Grief. And although the *Embassadors of Christ* ought to do their Duty from *Higher* motives than *Temporal* Encouragements (as being well assured that, tho' we spend our selves for nought, yet our labour is with the Lord, and our Judgment with our God, it being a small thing with us to be judged by Man's Day) nevertheless, it is your Duty to contribute all you can by *Temporal* encouragements towards our doing our Duty with the greatest alacrity.

Moreover, it is the Duty of our *Flocks* to help forward the great work of God's Kingdom by praying for us, that we may not corrupt the Word of God, but approve our selves as Ministers of God in much *Patience*, in *Afflictions*, in *Necessities*, in *Distresses*, in *Imprisonments* (if God should think fit to deliver us over into the power

of either *Popish*, or *Erastian* Fury) in *Tumults*, in *Labour*, in *Watchings*, in *Fastings*; by *Pureness*, by *Knowledge*, by *Longsuffering*, by *Kindness*, by the *Holy Ghost*, by *Love unfeigned*, by the Armour of *Righteousness* on the right hand and on the left, by *Evil report* and by *Good report*; that by means of your *Conversion* in our *Life* and at our *Death*, God may always cause us to triumph in *Christ*, when by your Growth in sanctifying Knowledge and Grace ye shall become our Crown of Rejoycing. *Happy Pastors! Happy People!* When thro' the well improved Grace of him *who is able to keep you from falling*, we shall present you *faultless before the presence of his Glory with exceeding great Joy.*

O Lord *Jesus Christ*, who at thy *first* coming didst send thy Messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the *Ministers* and *Stewards* of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the *Disobedient* to the *Wisdom of the Just*, that at thy *second* coming to Judge the World we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

SERMON XVII.

A DISCOURSE on the
DESCENT of CHRIST

INTO THE

WORLD of the DEAD,

And his *Triumphant* Return from it.

Preach'd at MERTON-ABBAY on
EASTER-DAY.

I. COR. XV. 20.

*Now is Christ risen from the
Dead; and become the first
Fruits of them that slept.*

OUT of *this* Chapter our Church
hath taken that *excellent* and *so-*
lemn portion of *Scripture*, which
she hath appointed to be read at
Funerals; And a very *instructive* Chap-
ter it is, full of both *Philosophical* and

Practical Matter: It treats *principally* of *two* very *sublime* subjects; *viz.* the *Resurrection of Christ*, which we at *this* time *Commemorate*; and next of the *Resurrection of all Mankind*, and proves the certainty of *both* these Articles of our *Faith*, with great *strength* and *solidity* of *reasoning*: The *Style* and *Character* of the *expression* is noble; and our *Inspired Apostle* seems in it to speak *above* himself.

That *branch* of it, which I have chose for the ground-work of my *present* Discourse, being one of the *Anthems* appointed for *this* Day's service, compriseth in it the two great Subjects which make up the General contents of the whole Chapter: For we have *two* things asserted in it. 1st. the Resurrection of *Christ*, which is already *past*. *Now is Christ risen from the Dead*. 2^{dly}. the Resurrection of *all Mankind*, which is to be hereafter, *and become the first Fruits of them that slept*.

First let us meditate on the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, as it is asserted in these Words, *Now is Christ risen from the Dead*, ἐγέρσεται ἐκ νεκρῶν, *hath been raised from being among the Dead*.

On this *subject* it will be useful *first* to shew the *Nature* and *Extent* of Christ's
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Resurrection; or, which is the same thing, to inquire what is meant by Christ's being *risen from the Dead*. 2^{dly}. To shew the *certainty* of his Resurrection: 3^{dly}. To observe what *Practical* Instructions may be learn't from the Consideration of Christ's being risen from the Dead.

I am *First* to consider the *nature* and *extent* of the *Resurrection* of *Christ*; or, which is the same thing, to inquire what is meant by Christ's being risen from the Dead.

In the Scriptures of the *new* Testament we read that *Christ* submitted to die, and that he was obedient to Death, even the Death of the *Cross*, and the like. Now if we consider what he underwent, when he entered into the State of a *dead* or *deceased* person, and what his being in the State of the Dead implied in it, we shall form our Notion of his Resurrection from the Dead with the greater exactness, because the State, in which the *Resurrection* placed him, is directly opposite to that State which he was in, between the time of his *expiring upon the Cross*, and his *rising from the Grave*.

Wherefore, since *Christ's dying upon the Cross* implyeth in it *first* his *Soul's separation from and desertion of his Body*:

and 2dly. doth imply in it *the Removal and departure of his Soul from the World wherein we live into Hades:* and 3dly. *the Dissolution of his Body, upon his Soul's departure from it, into a sluggish Mass of Matter, ceasing to exert any sort of Life, Sense or Motion, so as to be fit for no abode but the Grave.* On the contrary, his *Resurrection from the Dead* must also imply in it, *The return of his Soul from the Receptacles of Souls dwelling in Hades, into our own World:* and 2dly. *the Reunion of his Soul to his Body:* and 3dly. *the Restitution of his Body by the vivific influence of his Soul reunited to it, to a renewed State of Life, Sense, Motion and Activity.* I shall at this time consider only the *first* of these *three* properties of the *Resurrection of Christ.*

First then, I say, the *Resurrection of Christ* implieth in it the *return of his Soul from Hades into the World in which we live.* For the *exacter* proof of this *assertion*, I must, *first* shew that as soon as he died, his Soul departed from *our World of the Living into Hades, or the World and Receptacles of the Souls of the Dead:* for he must go *thither*, before he could return *thence.*

When our Saviour expired upon the
Cross

Cross, his *Soul* did not vanish into a finer sort of *Air*, or lie hovering about his *Body*; or loose its principle of *Life* and *activity*: Nor was the *exertion* of that *active* and *vital* principal *suspended* by such a sort of *Temporary Insensibility*, as *Socinians* and other *Soul-sleepers* do ascribe to the *departed Spirits* of Men, till the *Resurrection* of those *Bodies* which were before *animated* and *inhabited* by them. But it went into the *World of the Dead*; and visited the *Receptacles* of those *Souls* of Men which had been removed into the *separate State* before the *Death of Christ*.

But now if any should ask, granting that the *Soul* of our *Saviour*, during the Interval of Time that pass'd between his *Death* and *Resurrection*, went into the *World of the Dead*; whether his *Soul* in that *interval* was in *Heaven* or *Hell*? I answer in *neither* of them; if by *Heaven* you mean that *Place*, which will be the *seat* of *Holy* Angels and *Souls* *after the General Resurrection*; and by *Hell* you understand that place, which will be then the *confinement* of *Devils* and *Condemned Spirits* of the *Humane Class*: But if by *Heaven*, as in *this Question* you ought to understand it, you mean that *Happy PARADISE* or lower *Regions of Heaven*, wherein *Holy Souls* are

are placed *until* the Resurrection; and by *Hell* you understand those *less horrible* places in which Devils and condemned Souls do *wander* and are tormented *till then*; my answer is that he went into *Both* those places.

The World of the DEAD consists of *two* great Divisions, *one* part of it is allotted for the confinement of the Souls of *Wicked Men* departed; and the other *delectable Region* of it is allotted for the *rest* and *present reception* of the Souls of *Good Men* departed. Now our *Saviour*, according as I understand the *Scripture* account of it, visited *both* those Regions of the World of the Deceased, whilst his *Soul* was separated from his *Body*. Indeed our *English Translation* of the Creed saith that *Christ descended into Hell*, which, according to the *popular* and more *modern* use of the Word *Hell*, doth suggest the *Vulgar* Notion of our Saviour's going *only* to the Confinements of the *Damn'd*, during the Interval of his Souls separation from the Body; but the *Greek Original* saith that *He descended into HADES*; that is to say, into *the World*, or *the State of the Dead* in general, not into *that* part of it only which is assigned by the *Justice* of God for the custody of *Impenitent Souls Deceased*;

ed: for the term HADES, in the Sacred Dialect, doth no more signify the *particular* abode of *Wicked* Men Deceas'd, than the word *Grave*, in *our* Language, doth denote some *particular* place where only *Wicked* Men are *buried*: but is as *common* a Term with *Greek* Writers for the *General* place where the Souls of the Dead are, without determining the *particular happy* or *miserable* abode they are lodg'd in, according to the Sentence pass'd upon them when they die; just as the word *Grave* with us is a word used in common for the *repository* of the *dead* Body of either a *good* or a *wicked* Man: and indeed the import of the *Original derivation* of the word *ᾠδης* as signifying *Invisible* shews as much; since the *State* and *Place* of *Holy* Souls after Death is equally *Invisible* to us as the *State* and place of *Wicked* Souls after Death. So that I can't but think it were far better, if those words of the *Creed* were *englished*, *He descended into HADES*, with a Note of explanation of the Word: Or rather, *He descended into the World or State of the Dead*: for our *Blessed Lord* went into the *whole* World of the Dead in common; and not just into *one* part of it.

Nevertheless, upon the departure of the *glorious* Soul of *Christ* out of his Sacred Body,

Body, we may reasonably suppose, that he *first* traversed those Regions of the World of the Dead in which the *Condemned* Souls of Men are fetter'd with the chains of Darkness; because they lay first in his way in this his *Aereal* pilgrimage, since they are nearest to those *Regions* of the *Air* which are *contiguous* to our *Earth*; for the Receptacles of *Happy* Souls are *remoter* from us: Hence the *Devil's* Kingdom is called the Kingdom of *this* Air, that is of the *Air* *nearest* to our *Planet*; and 'tis probable that upon this account *Good* Men, as soon as they die, have *Holy* Angels allotted them, as *Lazarus* had, to convey them safe into the *resting-places* of the *Saints*; and to defend them from the assaults of *Evil* Angels and *Desperate* Souls in their way thither: for such is the situation of the *Hades* of *Evil* Spirits with regard to our *Earth*, and the *Hades* of *Blessed* Spirits; that they must pass through the *former*, before they can reach the *latter*: We may compare this passage to the going through a *dirty* lane, when we are travelling to a very *pleasant* Country at the end of our *Journey*: upon this account it is very convenient that *Good* Angels should always be planted by turns in the *hithermost* parts of *Hades*, to receive the Souls of *Good* Men newly depart-

departed; and to *Guide* and *Comfort* them in the *horrible* entrance of the *surprising* journey they are then taking: for they pass through the *Kingdom of Darkness*, or at least through some *Skirmish* of it, before they reach their desired Haven in some of the *Harbours of Abraham*; that their *true Canaan*, after they have travell'd through such an *horrendous Egypt*, may entertain them with the more *transporting* pleasure, and they may set the greater value on the favour of God, after they have seen what a *dismal* place they have escaped: for Dangers *seen* and *avoided* give the *sweeter* relish to *Life* and *Safety*; and the sight of the *miseries* of *others* often make us more sensible of the *mercies* which *we our selves* enjoy.

But now we are not to think, that our *Blessed Saviour* was in a State of *sufferings* in those parts of the World of the Dead, which are allotted to the *miserable*, whilst his *Soul* was travelling there; or that he *then* underwent any *Agonies* and *afflicting* or *penal* Impressions upon his *Mind* from the *Evil* Spirits which were imprisoned in them: No; there is no doubt but that those *curst* Spirits were forced, by the *brightness* of his *Divine* person, to shew the *profoundest* reverence to him; and were awed by the sight of him, who is to
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be their Judge at the Great Day, into the most servile veneration of him. For tho' his *Triumphant* Capacity was not then actually begun, as I shall afterwards shew, yet the dawn of it was then at hand, because the time of his *Resurrection* drew very near: and besides his *suffering* capacity was quite expired; for so we read *Luke* the xxii. *I say unto you, that this that is written must be accomplished in me; and he was reckoned among the transgressors; for the things concerning me have an end. Again, this [viz. this only] is your hour and the Power of Darknes.* So *St. John* the xix. Chap. *Jesus knowing that all things were accomplished, when he had received the Vinegar, said, It is finished, [viz. his passion] and bowed his head, and gave up the Ghost.* Thus, when he was expiring, he said, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit;* but not sure in order to suffer any more in another World, as he had done in this; no more than *St. Steven the Protomartyr* could possibly mean so when he said *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.* He whose *Body* could not be held under the power of the *First Death*, and did not see *Corruption*, tho' it saw *Death*, must not be supposed so much as even to taste of the *Second Death*, by undergoing any

any sort of *Purgatorial* or any other sort of Pains in the *other* World. And therefore the *Scripture* always ascribes the merits of Christ to his sufferings in the *Flesh*, to shew that he was an *Incarnate Saviour* of *Incarnate Souls*. Thus one passage of *Holy Writ* tells us, *Now hath he reconciled you in the body of his Flesh through Death*: and another, that *he made peace through the Blood of his Cross, reconciling all things to himself in Earth and in Heaven*. Again, in the *Epistle* to the *Hebrews*, *By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; having therefore, Brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, thro' the veil, that is to say his flesh, let us draw near*. And indeed I cannot find any *Scriptures* that speak of *Christ's suffering* in the *State of separation*. *Christ* suffered nothing *there* for us, and therefore let no Man presume that any sufferings of his between *Death* and the *Resurrection* will be *purgatorial* of his Soul there.

Indeed, in one Sense, the *State* of our *Saviour* in his *State of separation* might be called a *State of suffering*, as it was a *passive State of Death and imperfection*, because

because at that time the *intireness* of his *Humane* Nature was *broken* and *impaired*, the Soul being but a *part*, tho' the *better* and the *Principal* part of a Man. But then it ought to be *considered*, that this was only the *consequence* of his *past* sufferings upon the *Cross*; and so was *virtually* and *in effect* but a part of *those* sufferings: and on that account he might as well be said to suffer as much, when he visited the Regions of the *HAPPY Dead*, as he did whilst he was in the Regions of the *MISERABLE Dead*. That which I contend for, when I say *Christ* suffered nothing in any part of that interval of time, in which his *Soul* was in a State of Separation, no not *even* all the while he was in the confinements of *Condemned Spirits* is this; *he had no such thing as a sense of Pain in any place or region of the Dead*: No *Evil Spirit* durst to assault him with any sort of *violence* or *injurious* treatment.

And, as I can't agree with any who maintain that our Saviour *suffered* any thing of *Pain*, when he was among *Evil Spirits* in the World of the Dead: So I can't allow, on the other hand, that he did *then triumph* over the *Powers of Darkness*: For his Soul, 'till it was reunited to his Body (tho' it had no *Sense of Pain*, during its *separation*)

ration) yet, as it was a *Representative* of those Souls of Men, for whom he had died, had a mark of God's displeasure upon it, because it had the mark of *Death* upon it, during its separate State, which is always the effect of Sin *actual* or *imputed*: And if we had not been guilty of any actual Sin, our *Saviour*, who never committed any sin, would not have died, nor have subsisted any time with a Soul without a Body, when no Sin of ours would have been imputed to him for which his *voluntary* Generosity could induce him to undertake to become a *Sufferer*.

Besides, wherever the *Scripture* speaketh of the Triumphs of *Christ* over the powers of Darkness, it also speaks of the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of *Christ* into *Heaven*. When he ascended up on High, then he led Captivity Captive, as well as gave Gifts unto Men. *When God* (saith St. *Paul* in his *Epistle* to the *Ephesians* Chap. I. verse the 20.) raised *Christ* from the Dead, then he set him at his own right Hand in the Heavenly places, far above all Principality and Power and Might and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come. Hence too in the *Epistle* to the *Colossians*. Cap. II. 15.

Christ is said to triumph over *Principalities* and *Powers* (viz.) the *Powers* of *Darkness*, (for the *Hades*, which was their Residence at the time of his *Ascension*, was as directly in his road to the *Highest Heavens*, as it was in the travels of his separate Soul a few days before) in his *Body*; that is to say in his Incarnate Capacity which was renewed by the *Resurrection*.

But now if any one be at a loss to conceive for what reason our *Saviour* went into the Regions of *HADES*, which are allotted for *Condemned* Spirits in the World of the *Dead*, if, on the *one* hand, he was not in a *suffering* Capacity; nor on the *other* hand in a *triumphing* Capacity *there*; I offer *these Considerations* for their satisfaction in *this* particular.

Now, *first* it ought to be called to Mind, that his entering the World and State of the *Dead* in General was a necessary consequence of his Dying; and that his passage through the *neighbouring* Territories of the Air, where *Wicked* Souls departed are confined, was part of his journey, in the progress which he was taking into the Repositories of *Holy* Souls, to which his own *Immaculate* Soul did more peculiarly belong.

Secondly, his progress through those *horrendous*

rendous Territories, tho' it might not be with *triumphant* Pomp, might be *preparatory* to his *future* solemn Triumphs over the *Powers of Darkneſs*; for there is no doubt but that the Soul of the DIVINE JESUS had a particular luſtre, *discernible* to the Eyes of Souls, diſtinguiſhing him from other *common virtuous* Souls, who had been diſcharged from their Bodies *much about* that time in *different* parts of the World, and by his *permission*, or rather *Command*, gladly attended him together with the Soul of the *Penitent Thief*, and it might alſo excite in them a fearful remembrance of his coming to Judgment *hereafter* with *another-gueſs* ſort of attendance and ſolemnity. There is a prophecy in the LXIII. Chapter of *Iſaiah*, which (tho' it was more fully accompliſhed when our Saviour paſſed with both *Soul* and *Body* through the Kingdom of HADES, at the time of his *Ascenſion*) may be applied in ſome degree to his *leſs illuſtrious Epiphany* with his *ſeparate* Soul in the World of the Dead. It begins at the *fiſt verſe*; *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his Strength? I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave. Wherefore*

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fore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have troden in the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their Blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the Day of Vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondred that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought Salvation unto me, and my Fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine Anger, and make them drunk in my Fury, and I will bring down their Strength to the Earth. But I will go no further; I desire you to read the whole chapter at your leisure.

Thirdly, As Christ took the Human Nature upon him and so was related to all who had been partakers of it, tho' a long while deceased before he was born, it was proper for him to visit those Regions of HADES which were inhabited by Human Inhabitants, whether Good or Bad in a peculiar manner: For he had actually reconciled the Nature of all alike to God (and hence we read of his saving and being the Saviour
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of all Men) and thus he was the *Universal* Redeemer of all in general, tho' thro' their own fault he had not so *effectually* redeemed the *persons* of *some*, as he had of others: nevertheless the Habitation of Spirits *Condemned*, as well as that of those which were *absolved*, was to be visited by him; for he had good reason to go to them to claim a Dominion over his own purchase; and by the conviction of his presence, and of his *authoritative* Conversation with them, to *anticipate* in their Minds his *Condemnation* of those, who would not fit themselves for a Sentence of Mercy from him, when he will come to be the *Judge* of both *Quick* and *Dead*.

For, *fourthly*, tho' we no where read in the Word of God that our Saviour did exercise either his *Priestly* or *Kingly* Office among the Inhabitants of the World of the Dead, *during the State of separation*: Yet, I think, it is very plain from the I. Pet. III. 18. that he did in some degree, even at *that* time, exercise his *Prophetic* Office *there*. *Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to Death in the flesh, but quickned by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached to the Spirits in prison, which some-*

time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah. For, tho' God's *general* Rule is that those who are not in his favour, when they enter the *separate State of Souls*, must not hope to *find* or *procure* it by any thing that they can do *there*; yet, we know not but that our *Blessed Lord*, in his passage through the Territories of *Condemned* Spirits in the World of the Dead, might single out some of those *particular* Spirits as Objects of his *extraordinary* Mercy, whose former Impenitence was capable of the *mildest* Construction to be put upon it, as being recommended to the office of *new* Grace from him, by more *mitigating* circumstances than he knew the Impenitence of others had to *excuse* or *alleviate* it. There might be a readier faith *in* and reverence *of* himself, at his appearance in *Hades*, together with a more *Genuine* compunction for the Sins which they had committed presently *discernible* in them upon our *Saviour's* preaching *there* to them. And 'tis likely that most of the *Criminals*, who where thus elected out for his pardon on this *great* occasion, had lived here in the times of *Noah*, and had been cut off suddenly by the *Flood*. They, who had disregarded the preaching of *Noah*, might find
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the preaching of *Christ* irresistible; and so might reap the benefit of that *Jubilee* which attended our *Saviour's Resurrection*, when the Bodies of many others were raised together with his own: for so we read in *St. Matthew Chap. xxvii. verse the 52.* that the Graves were opened, and many bodies of Saints which slept arose; and came out of the Graves after his Resurrection, and appeared unto many. And thus the prophecy of *Isaiah* in the *Lxi. Chap.* and the *i. verse* was signally fulfilled, the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good Tidings to the Meek, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives; and the opening the prisons to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

But this was an extraordinary Case, and not to be relied on by us, when we enter the World of the Dead. any more than the case of the *Penitent Thief* on the Cross, whose circumstances were no less extraordinary in their kind, can reasonably be pleaded as a Precedent for our deferring our Repentance till we lie upon our Death-bed. And further of this subject it deserveth to be noted, that supposing this Mercy was thus granted to the separate Souls of many who were hurried off of the Stage of this Life by the General Flood; it was

not granted without this *limitation*, that they should have a new State of Tryal, for some short time at least in their *Incaruate Capacity*: for this is the Capacity in which (and in which *alone ordinarily speaking*) we ought to seek the favour of God.

Fifthly, Our Saviour, by his visiting the Regions of Condemned Spirits in the World of the Dead, did very much oblige *Holy Souls* departed to see their Redeemer passing through such an *Offensive* place, rather than he would not visit them; for he did in that interval of *separation* visit *their Regions* too, as I shall quickly shew.

Sixthly, It may help to comfort our Spirits, if we are good Men, upon a *Death-bed*; or whenever we think of our great change; to consider that (tho' our first entrance, after our departure out of this World into the World of the Dead, is very Dismal and Gloomy, because we are to pass through the *Kingdom* of *Darkness* into the *Seats* of the *Blessed*) our Saviour hath trod that way before us, and consecrated the melancholy passage, by his having claimed his *Dominion* over those Regions and the Inhabitants of them: His *Angels* by his order will strengthen us; and *Light everlasting* will quickly arise even out of that horrible *Darkness*. Thus

Thus much having been said concerning our Blessed Lord's visiting that part of the *World of Ghosts*, which *Providence* hath assigned for the *Receptacles* of *Wicked Souls* deceased: I proceed now to speak of his going into that part of the *World of the Dead*, which God hath assigned for the *Reception* and *Repose* of *Righteous Souls* departed out of this Life. *These* our Saviour might easily *visit* and *solace* with the Rays of his *Resplendent* person, as soon as he was passed through the *other* Regions of *HADES*. For *Souls*, especially when dismissed from Bodies, are very swift of Motion and can quickly travel from one World to another; and therefore can do it with much more ease from one part of the *same* World to another. Their Motion is swifter than the *flight* of *Lightning*, and rides more space than the *Wings of the Wind*.

And thus we must conceive that the *active* and the *nimble* Soul of the glorious *Jesus* could convey him with greater *speed* and *celerity* out of the *Regions* of *Wicked Souls*, into the *Country* of *Holy Souls* departed, than a Chariot of *Fire* and *Æther* can force it's way through the *Air* from one Quarter of the *Firmament* to another.

And tho' the *Parable* tells us that there is a great Gulf fixed between the place in
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the other World, where the delightful Tents of *Abraham* are pitched, and that deplorable place where *Dives* is scorched in a bed of Flames; so that there is no passage from *Abraham* to *Dives*; or from *Dives* to *Abraham*; yet, it cannot *reasonably* be supposed that this Gulf should be *impassable* to the Soul of Christ; for what *place* should be *impervious* to him, to whom all things are *possible*? Moreover, if so great a stress be to be laid upon the *circumstance* of a *Parable*, that *Parable* of *Dives* and *Lazarus* represents the *different* Regions, in which *Abraham* and *Dives* were *settled*, not to be so very *remote* in their respective *situation* to each other; but that they might be in *view* of one another, and hold some sort of *Communication* together, tho' they were parted by a vast *distance*, as may be learnt from what passed between the *tormented Glutton* and the *happy Patriarch* in the *separate State*. It is certain that the confinement of *Condemned Souls*, and the abode of *Holy Souls* are far nearer *now* than they will be *after the Resurrection*. For *then* the *Hell* of the *Damned* will be far *lower*, and the *Heaven* of the *Blessed* will be far *higher* than it is now; and therefore of course the *distance* will be far *greater* than it is between them at *present*.
But

But supposing the *present* distance between the Regions of *Blessed* and *Condemned* Spirits in the World of Souls were greater than it is; there is no reason to think that any distance could render any place *inaccessible* to the glorious Soul of Christ; for he *could*, and *did*, in a *small* space of Time, with the greatest ease, traverse *immense* tracts of *Air*; and take a full view of both the *Hemispheres* of the Dead.

And as I have already shewed you that he actually pilgrimaged through the dreadful apartments of *Condemned* Souls; so his own promise to the *Penitent Thief* on the Cross is sufficient to *evince* that quickly after his Death he entred into the sweet and delightful mansions of *Holy* Souls in their *separate State*. For said he, *To day shalt thou be with me in PARADISE*, which plainly implied that he would not be long out of it himself: And accordingly he quickly got *thither* after his *Death*: His stay without doubt was of the shorter continuance in the other *miserable* part of the Kingdom of *Hades*. He designed his *longest* visit at the seats of those *who died in the Lord*: His mind, all the while he was travelling through the neighbouring *Aceldama* of Souls, was fixed upon this *happy* and *delicious* place. *Here* his Soul sought for *repose*

pose after all his fatigue and sufferings upon *Earth*. In the glorious Regeneration of these Souls he saw the fruits of the travel of his own; here he had as many *Hecatombs* of *Gratitude* sacrificed and devoted to him as there were *Souls* to offer them; and none there offered any sacrifice of a meaner value than a *Soul* to him. Before he saw nothing but *Dread* and *Despair*; *Guilt* and *Hatred*; *Grief* and *Anguish*; and heard nothing but *weeping* and *wailing* and *hideous outcries* and *lamentations*, among the *greatest* number of those Souls that offered themselves with the most *ghastly* appearance to his notice. But in *Paradise* the Scene was Changed: the *Elysium* of the *Saints* did not resound with *Blasphemy* and *Curses*; but ecchoed with *Hallelujahs* and *Heavenly Musick*. *Joy* and *Charity* and *cheerful Veneration* present themselves on all sides to his sight. Here is nothing of *Complaint* or *Contention* to be heard of, but all *adore*, and adore him *gladly* and without constraint. The *Complacency* and *delight* which *He* takes in *them*, and *they* in *Him* is *inexpressible* on both sides. Here *Angels* ministred to him in far greater numbers than they did before, and he opens the *Mysteries* of *God's Kingdom* to them without *reserve* and without *reluct*.

reluctance; he can't say enough to express his Love to the *Colonies* of *Saints* whom he finds planted in these parts. Nor could the *Saints* find any expressions full enough to signify their *Joy*, *Affection* and *Thankfulness* to their *Condescensive*, *Loving* and *Gracious* Redeemer. All their *Converse* was made up of *Love* and the most *Heroic* Friendship: all their employment is *Psalmody* and *Devotion*. GOD, JESUS and the *Graces* of the *Saints* is the entire entertainment of their thoughts and esteem. They know no bounds; they know no end of *Loving*, *Praising* and *Admiring* God and *Christ*, and one another: Every *Soul* wisheth himself owner of *Millions* of Souls that he might have the larger Capacity for the *Contemplation* and *Love* of such *amiable* and *enraving* Objects. Who can conceive the Raptures and extasies of Joy, into which the first approach of the Soul of *Jesus* towards the *Confines* of *this* part of the World of the Dead threw all the Inhabitants of it? What a delightfull spectacle would it have been for us to see them, when they met and saw and congratulated the great and long expected *Messiah*, just before the prefixed Hour of his Resurrection, and when his *Triumphant* State was just commencing? But how far *greater* will their Joy

Joy be at the General Resurrection, when they shall meet him in the Clouds of Heaven, and his *whole Incarnate* Nature shall be *glorified* and surrounded with glittering Hosts of Angels, to receive them together with himself reunited to their respective Bodies into a World of *Consummate* Glory, as well as Happiness?

This, I hope, is sufficient to shew how our Saviour's Death occasion'd the *departure* of the *Soul* of *Christ* from the *World* of the *Living*, and its *Removal* into the *World* of the *Dead*. Wherefore his *Resurrection from the Dead* implys in it his *return* from *their* World into *ours* again; for, as I observ'd before, the expression *ἀπὸ νεκρῶν* may be rendred, *from among Dead persons*. At the *Resurrection* Death ceased to have any shadow of *Dominion* over him: He then ceased to be numbred among the Dead, and to converse in such a manner as he did, whilst his *Soul* was separated from his *Body*. *In that he died, he died unto Sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God, that is for ever.*

2dly. *Christ's* being risen from the Dead implys in it the *reunion* of his *Soul* to his *Body*. But I must reserve that *Head* for another opportunity, and shall now conclude with one *Practical* Inference, which I shall draw

draw from the Consideration of Christ's return from the World of the *Dead* to the World of the *Living*.

Now then, since Christ, by his return from the World of the *Dead* to the World of the *Living*, hath evidently made good his Profession REV. I. 18. *I am he that liveth, and was Dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the Keys of Hell*, that is, of *Hades* and of *Death*; let us not be dismayed, tho' we know we must die and travel into the World of the Dead; neither let our Hearts be troubled: We shall go no where, but where our *Lord Christ* hath been before us: If we go into never so many parts of that World, we cannot wander out of His *Dominions*, he hath *Angels* every where planted ready to *guard, protect* and *comfort* those who were his faithful servants. Let us be sure to secure an Interest in *Him* by *Gratitude* to him for all his *amazing* expressions of *Kindness* to the Sons of Men. Let us be examples of *Penitential* sorrow for all our offences against him; such as *terminates* in an effectual *purification* of our *Hearts* and an *amendment* of our *Lives*. Let us place a *firm Faith* in the *Doctrine* of this great *Prophet*; and in the *Sacrifice* and *Intercession* of this High Priest: and such an one as discovers it self
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to be *Divine*, by our submission to the *Guidance* and *Discipline* of his Spirit, and as becomes our expectation of the glorious triumphs of this everlasting King. Let us imitate his *Purity*, *Charity*, *Self-denyal*, *Resignation*, *Patience*, *Devotion*, *Humility*, *Fortitude*, *Candour*, *Sobriety*, and *stedfast Perseverance* unto the end in the Conscientious discharge of our Duty, that by following him in the *World of the Living*, we may so follow him, both *into* and *out* of the *World of the Dead*, as to pass at his *second Advent* from thence with him *World without end, Amen.*

Now unto *Jesus Christ*, who is the *faithful witness* and the *first begotten of the Dead*; and the *Prince of the Kings of the Earth*: Unto him that *loved* us and *washed* us from our *Sins* in his own *Blood*; and hath made us *Kings* and *Priests* unto *God* and his *Father*: To him be *Glory* and *Dominion* for ever and ever, *Amen*

SERMON XVIII.

Upon the RESURRECTION—

WORLD of GLORY,

PREACH'D before the

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

LUKE XX. Verses the 35, 36.

They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither marry nor are given in Marriage.

Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection.

So generous, so exceeding Generous is God to the Chilaren of Men, as to ordain a subsistence for them in three different Worlds, one after another; I say so exceeding Generous; for

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tho' *three* Worlds are very *few*, when Compar'd with the Innumerable Orbs of his making: yet, they are a Noble *largess* for the *Almighty* to bestow upon any *particular* Class of his Creatures. The *Munificence* of this Gift will appear the greater, if we will think so justly, as to know that among *Created* Minds, those of the *Human* Order make the lowermost Round in the *whole* Scale. This branch of a *Plurality of Worlds* deserves a *larger* share of thought than is usually bestowed upon it: for among *Doctrines* few are more *sublime*; and among *Motives* none are more *forcible* and *persuasive* to a zealous pursuit of *Virtue*, than those which arise from a frequent Contemplation of those *Diviner* Scenes which are reserv'd for us in *Eternity*.

The place of *Scripture*, which I have just now read to you, will oblige me to speak of One, and that too the *Principal* of those *three* Worlds; namely the State and Habitation of Good Men, which is to begin *after the Resurrection*. For by the *Resurrection from the Dead* the Resurrection of the *Just* must be here denoted; because 'tis such a World and such a Resurrection, as all will not be qualified for; tho' the bodies of all Men will rise from their Graves, yet some of them to *Contempt*. Whereas,
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here is a *Restraint*, for 'tis said, *They who shall be accounted Worthy*, that is meet; for the Justest Man will not be Worthy of it in the *strictest* Sense of *Merit*. Besides, the other Characters of being *equal to the Angels*, of being the *Sons of God*, and *Sons of the Resurrection* can in this Text be applicable only to Good Men, as the *Occasional* explication of these expressions, according to the *Syriac Phraseology*, will afterwards inform us. In order hereunto, as not long since, I spoke of some of the properties of the State of the Souls of Men, between the *Death* and the *Resurrection* of their *Bodies*; so now I design to take notice of some of the *distinguishing* properties of the State of Good Men, after the General Resurrection.

Now we may Consider that *World*, *First*, as 'twill be the *Third World* of the Souls of Men. *2dly*. As 'twill be a *State of Glory in General*. *3dly*. as 'twill be a *State of Glorified Minds*. *4thly*. as 'twill be a *State of Glorified Bodies*. *5thly*. as it will be a *State of Glorified Souls*.

First, I say, the State of Good Men after the Resurrection may be consider'd as a *Third World of Souls*. This Expression of a *third State* hath been improperly applied to the State of *separate Souls*: for

whereas some have erroneously conceiv'd, that some Men when they die, are in such a *Mystical* condition, as not to be good enough for the *Heaven* of Good separate Souls, nor bad enough to be thrown into the *Hell* of Wicked separate Souls, but are dispos'd of, where they are in *suspence* whether they shall be *Miserable* or *Happy* after the Resurrection; this they call a *Third* State. Now I think it proper to prevent mistakes to assure you, that I hold no *third* State in that Sense: For tho' Good Men may be in *suspence* about the *particular degrees* of *Glory*, which the *Second* Judgment may assign them; and Bad Men may be in *Suspence* about the *particular degrees* of *Torment* to which they shall be doom'd by the *Second* Judgment of the Resurrection; yet, the Sentence of the *first* Judgment do's sufficiently assure them whether they shall be Happy or Miserable in *General*; and by what they are *now*, as I have formerly shew'd you, they know what they will be *for ever*; for tho' the Sentence of the *Second* Judgment will be more *explicit* as to some particulars; yet 'twill be a *Ratification* of the General tenour of the Sentence of the *first Tribunal*, which sits upon Souls as soon as they leave their earthly Bodies; for *after Death there is a Judgment*;

ment; a *Keiōs* a *discrimination* of Good Men from *Bad*, and of the *Happy* from the *Miserable*. Wherefore, by a third State of Souls, I mean *a third in Order*; a World that we shall live in after we have lived in two *different* sorts of Worlds before it. Now this property of the Resurrection World would even in a Natural way argue it a State of Great *Perfection*. The bare *Experience* of two Worlds must needs enlarge our Souls very much. The Mind of Man can't enter a *Second* World so destitute of Knowledge and Generous design as it enter'd the first; and if it could enlarge its Temper and Capacity in a *first* and *second*; how much more will it be *refin'd* and *extended* in it's views and good qualities, as soon as it becomes an Inhabitant of a *third* World? The *new* and more *spacious* Scenes, which will display themselves *there*, will furnish the *Soul* with a more ample Fund of *Ideas*: There it will have had a longer Conversation with *Blessed Spirits*, endued with a Vast diversity of Glory, which alone without it's former Experience must exceedingly *polish* and *improve* it. All Souls must arrive to their utmost Perfection in a *third* State, for none are ordain'd for a *fourth*; this therefore, since it will be the last, will give the *finishing* Stroke to the Improve-

ment of every *Saint*; as will better appear if we proceed in the *second* place to Consider it as a *State of Glory in General*.

Not to insist now upon the Contents of my Text: the Spirit of God doth every where make *Glory* the Characteristic of the *third* World of the Saints. Thus St. Paul Comforts himself and his afflicted Brethren, II. Cor. IV. 17, 18. with the prospect of this World under the Notion of a World of Glory. *Our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are Temporal, but the things which are not seen are Eternal.* That the *Apostle* here has the *World of the Resurrection* in his Eye, without any regard to the separate State of Souls, is evident from the 14 verse. *He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* To the same purpose we read Rom. VIII. 18. *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us.* I. Pet. I. 6, 7. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, ye are in heaviness through manifold Temptations;*

ons; that the trial of your Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise and Glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ. The same Apostle at the 10th. verse of the 5th. Chapter calls it *Eternal Glory*. But to multiply SS for a proof of a Truth so universally acknowledged, would be both *Endless* and *Needless*: However, I have set these together before you, that we may the better see, why, and in what Sense that State is called a *State of Glory* by way of Preeminence above the *second* World of Humane Souls.

Now, tho' I grant that it will be more glorious than any other World, by the *Splendour* and *Magnificence* of the place in which they dwell; by their freer *Conversation* with the *Holy Angels*; by brighter *Irradiations* from the *Human Person* of the great *Mediator* between God and Man; and by more *liberal* and *diffusive* Manifestations of the Presence of God with them; yet this term *Glory*, throughout the *Current* of the *Scripture*, has a peculiar and principal Reference to the Persons of the Saints. Hence, as you have heard, it was call'd *the Glory, that will be revealed in us*.

Now, that we may the more clearly conceive what this *Glory* of our *Persons* is, we ought to call to Mind that the *Souls of Men*, under the *Oeconomy* of a *Redeemer*, are design'd for *Content* in a *first World*, for *Happiness* in a *second*; and for *Glory* in a *third*. Their *first World* being known by them to be a State of *Minority* and *Discipline*, they are not so Vain as to look for Perfection in it.

Wicked Men aim at *Happiness here*, where it cannot be had; and so miss of that *Content*, which can be had *here*; and of *Happiness* and *Glory* hereafter in those *succeeding Worlds*, in which *alone* such noble Attainments can be within our Reach. But *Good Men* are too *wise* to aim at *Happiness* here: They take *this World* as they find it, and make the *most* of it, that it will afford: Now by the help of *Virtue*, and a *well-cultivated Reason*, it will afford *Content*.

They that are *born again* know themselves to be *Followers* after an *high Prize*, but what can't be *attained* till they are *transplanted* into a *Remoter Region*. However, they *follow after* it with diligence, that they may come as near it as possible, tho' they can't quite reach it: and their *good Conscience* bearing them Witness, that
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they are diligent in the pursuit of it, gives them that *less perfect ease of Mind*, which otherwise they could not enjoy. This *Content* is not so *uninterrupted* here, as to *fill* the Soul: However it *mitigates* the *trouble*, and *sweetens* the *blessings of a Life*; which is so over-grown with *Thorns and Briars*, that the *Lazy*, the *Uncircumspect*, and the *Profane* cannot avoid being scratched by them.

Particulars best *explain* things; let us therefore consider both the *Understanding* and the *Will* of the *Mind of Man*, in quest of the *respective Goods*, which are *Perfective* of each *faculty*.

And *first*, as to the *Understanding*; it may be observed that whosoever seeks *Knowledge* by *Prayer*, *Meditation* and *Temperance*, finds himself *improved*, though he seeth himself still capable of some *higher* improvements, which neither *Diligence* nor *Devotion* can procure him, in his present *Station*. However, he is easier with what he doth *attain*, than if he had not attained what he *hath*; or had not *strove* to *attain* more, tho' in vain; and will be uneasy, whenever he gives over his endeavours in order thereunto; for he finds such a *disposition* of *Mind*, and such an *habit* of *Industry* to be a *preparatory Qualification* for
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that State; *where* God will fill his *Understanding* with such *sorts*, and such *determinate degrees* of *Truth* and *Knowledge*, as will prove *perfective* of his *Intellectual Capacity*: And hence it is, that an humble Man's pursuit of *Knowledge* gives him *some* satisfaction (which may be called *the Content of the Understanding*) notwithstanding the *imperfectness* of his *Attainments*.

In like manner, with regard to the *Will*, it must be confessed that the *Holiness* of the *best* Men (which is the result of *Prayer* and *Mortification*, and of an earnest pursuit of Growth in *Grace* and *Virtue*) is as *imperfect* in *this* World as the *Knowledge* of the most *Wise* and *Learned* is so. Nevertheless, with all its *Imperfection*, 'tis a *testimony* of our *sincerity*; and an *earnest* of a *compleater* participation of a *Divine Nature* in *another* Life: And for this reason even such *Imperfect Godliness* is attended with *Contentment* here; and with that *Hope* which is a firm and steadfast *Anchor* of the Soul, 'till our *Charity* or *Heavenly* temper shall be *compleat* enough in a *better* World, to be *perfective* of the *Will* and *Principle* of *Liberty* in every Saint.

This *Content* hath its use at present, but its value is the greater, because it terminates
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in *Happiness* at the beginning of the *second* World of Souls. For *Godliness with Contentment is great gain, having the promises of this Life, and that which is to come.* They who enjoyed *Content*, or an *Acquiescence of Mind* in imperfect circumstances, in this *present* Life, meet with *Happiness* in the *next*. For *Happiness* is the *fulness* of every Capacity of our *Nature*, according to that *extent* of Capacity with which it entreth that World: for so we are told, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord.* There the *Mind* is filled with all that *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* which it can possibly hold; and the *elective faculty* is filled with all that *Charity* whereof it is *receptive*.

Now those several proportions of *WISDOM* and *CHARITY*, which fill the *diverse* Capacities of different Souls, make them all *equally Happy*, because they are *equally filled*; and so are all as *Happy* in their *several* shares of *Charity* and *Wisdom*, as *GOD* is in the enjoyment of the *Infinite Knowledge* and *inexhaustible Beneficence* of an *Almighty Creator*. This Truth is *mathematically* demonstrable; tho' I am not unaware that *Divines* usually say there are *Degrees of Happiness*: But that is not the Language of *Scripture*, tho' it often

ten speaks of *Degrees of GLORY*, which is what they mean by *Degrees of Happiness*, which is an Ill-chosen *Term*, for there may be *Degrees of Glory*, but there can't be *Degrees of Happiness*. For the *Glory* of the *Vessels of God's Grace and Mercy* doth consist in the *largeness* of their *Capacity*; and some *Vessels* will be more *Capacious* than others, and therefore will be more *Glorious* in proportion to their *Magnitude* as one *Star* differeth from another *Star* in *Glory*, because it differs in *bulk* from another. Nevertheless, they will be equally *Happy*, because *equally Filled*, but not *equally full*, because *unequally Capacious*; and therefore do hold *unequal* proportions of *Knowledge* and *Charity*: But are fully pleas'd with their *respective* proportions; and in that their *Happiness* is founded, tho' their *Degrees of Eminence* are as *various*, as the *proportions* of their *Capacity*.

Accordingly, *Inspired Writers* seem to me, in a more emphatical manner, to call the *World of the Resurrection* a *State of Glory*; because at that last *ÆRA*, not only all the *Capacities* of our *Nature* will be *filled*; and consequently all the *Inhabitants* of *that World* will be *Happy*: But moreover the *Capacities* of the *Saints* will be enlarged to the *utmost* extent, which *God* hath *foreordain-*

dained for them. *Humane Nature* in the ground-work of the *Mind* will then be *augmented* beyond its reach in a *former* World; and the *Body* will not only be *restored*, but *renewed* and *beautified* in an amazing manner and to a wonderfull degree.

As our *Nature* in general will be more *extensive*; so the *Capacities* of particular Saints will be enlarged in *determinate* proportions: Some in *greater*, others in *lesser*: Some will be *Rulers* of *five* Cities and others of *ten*. Now as in *this* World, he who has nothing to do in *Government* may be as contented, nay more so, as he that hath an whole *City* under his *Jurisdiction*; So in the *last* World of the *Saints* the *Ruler* over *ten* Cities will not be more *happy* than the *Ruler* over *five*; since *all* in *that* World will be *happy* by the *standing* Laws of it: Yet, the *Ruler* over *ten* will be more *glorious* than the *Ruler* over *five* Cities there, because he is a *larger* and more *radiant* Star in the *new Jerusalem*. But to be more *particular*,

Let us 3dly. consider the *last* World of the *Saints*, as a *State* of perfect *Glorification* of *Mind*: There our *Understanding*, instead of every *Idea* which it hath *here*, will have ten times ten thousand. And as
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their *number* will be prodigiously *multiplied*; so their *familiarity* by our *clearer perception* of them will make them more *enlightning* to us.

Besides, their *agreeableness* to our thoughts will render them a *perpetual* entertainment to us; for none of them in their *Qualities* will be *despicable* or *degrading* to the Minds that are *intent* upon them; like those which arise in us at the sight of some objects in a *Probationary Orb* smarting for the sins of its Inhabitants: None of them *tedious* by their *frequency*: None of them *Ghastly* or *Horrific*, as those of *Death* and of the *Inventions* of the *Cruel* and *Blood-thirsty*: None of them *impure* and *annoying* or a *fuel* of *Temptation* to *Sin*; as those which our *Senses* take from the *Corrupt* examples of *Men*, and the *suggestions* of the *Devil*. But all of them will be as innumerable and *beautiful* as the *Stars*. Their *Magnificence* will engage our *Admiration*: Their *agreeableness* will support the *serenity* of our *Minds*, and minister to incessant extasies of *Joy*. Nothing shall occur to our *Reflections* but what our *memories* will take delight in. Our *Sins* shall be *forgotten*, but our *Good deeds* shall be *remembered*. The sensations of our past *Grief* and *Shame* shall be expired,

red, and a constant Circle of those which are intirely *Joyous* and *Delightfull* will succeed in their room. The *Voice* of *Singing*, and the *Harmony* of *Harps* and *Hallelujahs*, will Charm our Senses, when all *sorrow* and *sighing* shall flee away, never to return to our *notice* or *disturbance* in the least.

As our *Knowledge* will be *clearer* and of a *better* sort, so it will come *cheap* to us: No *toilsom* searching nor *vexations* arguing will be necessary: It will not be a *few Sparks* struck out of a *Flint*: But, a *Gratuitous Ray*; a *flood* of *bright Beams* from the *Throne* of *Glory*. The *Nature* and *Decrees* of *God*; the *unsearchable Judgments* of his *Providence*, his *administration* of the *loftiest Hosts* and *Hierarchies*; The *series* and *courses* of all the *Heavenly Bodies*, and their *astonishing motions* in *Immense Seas* of *Æther*, will with *ease* and *accuracy* be *surveyed* by us, where we shall cease to see *God darkly* through the *Glasses* of *Reason*, of the *Creation*, and of the *Works* of *Providence*; and in the *Revelations* of *Ink* and *Paper*; and shall see him *face to face*, and shall so see him without the *agonies* of the *dying*, tho' we now feel them at the *sight* of an *Angel* or a *Spirit*.

A *Glorified Understanding* is not sufficient of it self to make a *glorified Mind*; Wherefore, 3dly. in *that World* the *commanding faculty* of the *Spirits* of the *Just* shall be answerable in *Glory* to their *Intellectual splendour*. All their *choices* will be *Divine*; Every *Passion* in them will *concenter* with the *Law* of *God*. A *God-like Charity* will make the numberless *Myriads* of *Just Men* made perfect like *one Heart* and *one Soul*. All those, being thus made one, will become a *Chast Spouse* to *Christ*, and by the *rapid Stream* and *Byass* of their affection towards his *Divine Person* will be one *Spirit* with the *Lord*. Thus their *Holiness* will be *compleat* without spot and blemish. The *Divine Nature* in them shall have arrived unto its full *maturity*, and will be so firmly rooted in a *flourishing Condition* that they will be *indefeetibly Holy*.

4thly. Not only our *Minds* but our very *Bodies* will be *Glorified* in the *Resurrection-World*. Tho' they will consist of the *same Matter*, yet, they will be very much altered in the *Configuration* of their particles, and endowed with very different properties; for *Phil. III. 21.* our *Blessed Saviour* will *change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body*. The
Body

Body with which our *Saviour ascended* into *Heaven* (for that was his *glorious Body*) was a *spiritual Body*, originally born of a *Virgin*, by the *overshadowing* of the *Holy Ghost*; and raised *triumphantly* from the *Grave* by the *same Spirit*, which was resident in our *Saviour's Humane Soul*, no less than in his *Deity*, whilst it was separated from the *Body*. Now *this Spirit* resides in all the *Separate Souls* of the *Righteous*. For so we read *Rom. VIII. II.* that *Christ* will *quicken* the *Mortal Bodies* of the *Saints* by his *Spirit*, that *dwelleth in them*. By *Virtue* of the said *residence* of this *Divine Spirit* they are the *Children of God*; and being thus the *Children of the Spirit of God*, by the *renovation* of their *transformed Minds*, (for they were *born of the Spirit*, in their *Spirits*) they become *Heirs of God* and *Joint-heirs of Christ*; and so are *the Sons of the Resurrection*: that is (for the words are an *Orientalism*) they *have a right* to be raised again to a *State of Bodily Life*, and take delight in their prospect of it: And being so raised by the *glorifying Energy* of the *Spirit of God* within their *regenerated Minds*; they are the *Sons of God* after the *Resurrection*, as they were in their *Spirits* before it. The *Resurrection* is, as it were, their *Parent*.

Now this *Resurrection*, being *immediately* wrought by the Spirit of God, is a Principle of *Incorruption*: Hence it is that they *will not die any more*. And forasmuch as no *new* Creatures are after that time to be produced, they will not in *that* World *generate* new Bodies, as they did in *this*; for their *glorified* and *celestial* Body, having no other *Parent* but God, must no more *propagate* than it must *die*: For *that* World will be well Peopled by a *Complement* of all past Ages: and since they will never *die*, their *Species* will not want *Successors* to support it. For this reason *they will neither Marry, nor be given in Marriage*. 'Tis below the *Dignity* of *that* World for any Inhabitants thereof to be otherwise produced than by God's *instantaneous* Exertion of his *Power*. And he did *so* exert it at their *Resurrection*. Thus all *Angels* and *sublimer Beings* came into *their* World; and thus will the Inhabitants of the *Third Humane World* (since there *Mankind* will attain *Perfection*) enter their *last* and *completest* Mansions: And because *there* they were neither *propagated* themselves, nor will propagate others, or will ever *die*, they are said *to be equal to the Angels of God*. * But this *particular* claim of e-

* Erit ibi Deus omnia in omnibus, & illius præsentia omnes
quality

quality with the Angels is common to the *Good* with the *Bad*; for *their Bodies* as well as the Bodies of the *Good* will neither *propagate* nor *die* any more: When therefore it is said of the *Saints* that *they will not die* any more, we must understand it of their *Souls*, as well as of their *Bodies*: They will never Fall from *God*, as they did in their *first Protoplast*, nor be in danger of so falling: for the *Divine Seed*, which they receive from the *Holy Ghost*, under the *Oeconomy* of their *second Protoplast* the Lord from Heaven, remaineth in them throughout their whole Person, and will secure both *Mind* and *Body* from all sorts of *Corruption*: The *Angels* will be then their *Companions*; but will no longer be necessary *Guardians*, as they were upon *Earth* in times of *Danger* and *Temptation*; nor for *Guides* and *Defenders* as they were at their entrance into *H A D E S*.

Then the *ministratorii Angelicarum virtutum discursus*, as St. *Cyprian* elegantly expresseth it, the Angels being planted in several *stations*, in several *Worlds* by turns, in order to *Minister* to the *necessities* of the

animæ & corporis implebit appetitus; cessabuntque de cætero consummatis omnibus ministratorii Angelicarum virtutum discursus: Et impletâ ordinatâque omnino civitate Dei, nec innovabitur, nec mutabitur ultra fixæ & consummatæ Beatitudinis Status. *Cyprian. de laude Martyr.*

Heirs of Salvation, will cease to be necessary: for God will be *every thing* to them for ever.

The *First Protoplast* sowed the *Bodies* of his Children in *weakness*; for it was a *Work of Time*, and with a *loss of Strength*: He sowed them in *Dishonour*, for it was a work of which we are *ashamed*, and his productions were in *imperfect* proportions: He sowed them in *Corruption*; for any *violence* without, or *disease* within will *destroy* or *dissolve* them. But the *new Protoplast from Heaven* begets all his Children *at once*, and not *by degrees*: begets them *Adult*, not *Infants*: begets the *Spiritual*, *Immortal*, *Impassible*, not *Vile Bodies*, which call the Worm Sister and Corruption Mother. Whilst we bear the Image of the *Earthly Protoplast*, we labour under *Weakness*, *Want*, *Deformity*, *Diseases*; and at last submit to the rigid Stroke of *Death*: But when we shall bear the Image of the *Heavenly Protoplast*, we shall move *swift-er* than *Wings*; be *stronger* than *Lions*, more *durable* than the *Diamond*, and more *beautiful* than the *Sun*. Every *Saint* there will be a *Beauty*, they will be all *General Lovers*, but none of the *Carnal sort*.*

* Quale erit corpus quod omnimodo Spiritui subditum, &

Lastly,

Lastly, The Resurrection World of the Saints will be a State of glorified Souls. By Souls here, I do not mean the Spirit of Man consider'd abstractedly by it self, (for in that Capacity I have treated of it under the Term of glorified Minds) but as it will be in a State of Union with a Glorified Body. Thus the Apostle seems to use the Expression, when he prays in behalf of the Thessalonians, that God would sanctify them throughout their whole Spirit, Soul and Body. Our Minds could Know and Will with Pleasure, or Uneasyness, if they were not in Bodies; They exercise both those functions in their Separate State from Bodies; the Holy with delight; and the Wicked with uneasiness: But they would not be conscious of Thirst or Hunger, or of the uneasy sensations of Lassi-

eo sufficienter vivificatum nullis alimoniis indigebit? Non enim animale, sed spiritale erit: habens quidem carnis, sed sine ullâ carnali corruptione, substantiam. *Aug. de Civit. Dei. C. 22. c. 24.*

Perpetua sanitas, foelix æternitas, beatitudinis illius sufficientiam confirmabunt; non erit Concupiscentia in membris; non ultra ulla exurget rebellio carnis: sed totus status hominis pacificus, sine omni maculâ & rugâ permanebit. *Cyprian. de laude Martyrum.*

Nam si per se vita fugienda est ut sit molestiarum fuga, requies ærurnarum, quanto magis ea requies est expetenda cui futura Resurrectionis voluptas perpetua succedit? ubi nulla criminum series, nulla illecebra delictorum. *Ambros. Lib. de Resurr.*

tude or *Concupiscence* on the one hand; or of the *opposite joyous sensations* which on the other hand do attend the *removal* of such *uneasinesses* out of Bodies. When therefore I say that our *Souls will be glorified* in the *Resurrection-World* of the *Saints*; I would be understood to conceive that the Mind *then* and *there* will suffer no *inconveniencies* by its *Relation* and *Union* to a *Body*, tho' *now* and *here* it suffers that way. The *Body* then will not want to be *subdued*; 'twill be no *source* of *temptations*, or *sink* of *Diseases*; no *incentive* to evil *passions* or *practices*; not *clogged* with *Phlegm*, or *inflamed* by *Choler*: It shall sit as light upon the Mind as a *Vehicle* of the *finest Air*; be no hindrance to the Noble Aims of *Philosophy*, or the nobler Acts of *Devotion*, or *Benevolence*. On the contrary, a *glorified Body* will be *originally* so built and *contemper'd*; and so *constantly* preserved in *subordination* to the *Mind*; that a *Soul* shall *contemplate* and *love* with as much *Ease* and *Pleasure* and *Innocence* as a *Pure Spirit*: In this respect, as well as others, *Saints* with their Bodies shall be equal to the *Seraphim* without them. As they will not *Marry*, so neither will they *want* to *Marry*: as they will not *die*, so neither will they have any apprehension of dying. So

So it will be with them *then*: But *now* we live upon other terms, and must go through the *State* of *Death*, before we can taste the *Joy*s of *Separate* Souls; or partake of the glories of the *Resurrection*. In the mean while, *Good Men* should think much upon *that* World, that they may comfort *themselves* and *one another* with the prospect of a State where they will be ever with the Lord. O how *plenteous* is the *Goodness* which God hath laid up for them that fear him! too *big* for our *Heart* as yet to *conceive*. Could our *Eyes* in their present State behold it, they would be *dazzled* into *Blindness*: Could our *Tongues* speak the Language of Saints *Triumphant*, they would *Stammer* like those of Persons besides themselves for *Joy*: Could our *Ears* hear the mighty *thundrings* and *voices* with which their *Harmony* resoundeth, we should become *stupid* as a *Statue*; for the *other* World, because of the *imperfection* of the *Faculties* of our *Minds*, and of the *Organs* of our *Bodies*, cannot be enjoyed by us under our present *temperature* and infirmities. However, we are bound to give thanks to God, for calling us through *sanctification* of the *Spirit*, and belief of the truth to the obtaining, in his appointed time, of the *Glory* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. 'Tis

high time for us, who have such views set before us, to put away *Childish* things; to cast off all our *Vice* and *Follies*; to *improve* our *Minds* in *sound* Knowledge; to keep our Bodies under; to do all the good we can in our *Station*: to be *just* in our *Contracts*, and *inoffensive* in our *Diversions*; and forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; to press towards the Mark, if by any means we can attain *unto the Resurrection of the just*: We shall be stark Fools, if we *neglect* this; and it will be our own fault, if we don't *attain* it. Let not the *mighty* Man glory in his *Strength* and *Power*, for the *Race* is not to the *swift*; nor the rich Man in his wealth; for hath not God chose the poor of this World that are rich in Faith? nor the *wise* Man in his Wisdom, unless he knows and believes that, tho' no Man knows God's love and hatred by his Circumstances in this *World*; yet in the land of Righteousness Men will be rewarded, according to their *intrinsick Worth* and *Distinctions*. In the *True*, the *Real*, the *Immoveable* World there will be no riddles in the Dispensations of Providence. The *preferments* which God knows to be worth the acceptance of his *Favourites* will be distributed with an *Exact*
and

and *Impartial* hand. The Hearts of the *Sanctified* are Heavenly minded, because they are too *large* in their *Hopes*, too *noble* in their *Ambition* to take up with any thing here below. This World considered without its *relation* to, and *Introduction* of them into *another* would be look'd upon by them as no better than a *Theatre*. Our time here is but *short*: Wherefore with regard to our present abode and the *interests* and *changes* of it, our *passions* ought to be *moderate*. It remaineth that they that have *Wives* be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that buy, as tho' they possessed not; and they that add House to House and Land to Land, as tho' they had none; and they that use this World, as not abusing it, for the Fashion of this World passeth away.

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S E R M O N

PREACHED at

St. MARGARET'S-*Westminster.*

To the REVEREND

Dr. O N L Y,

First PREBENDARY of

St. PETER's Church in *Westminster*.

HONORED SIR,

THIS *Sermon* having been *deliver'd* to a *Congregation*, which hath for many years rejoyced in the *Light* of your *Preaching* and *Example*; and being now published by your *Encouragement*; I hope you will forgive my taking the Liberty of putting it under your *Protection*.

It belongs to the *Good Steward*, and may for that reason very justly claim your *Patronage*: If you should offer to *deny* this; your own *Children* and *Parishioners*, many *Orphans* and *Widows*,
all

DEDICATION.

all that have the honour to *Know* you, and especially those who have had an opportunity of observing the *pious* and *beautifull* *Oeconomy* of your *Family*, will readily take my part against you.

I dare be confident that the separate State of Souls is no frightfull Subject to Dr. *Only*, who has arrived to the Ornament of an *hoary Head* by a long practice of *Virtue*; and thinks too justly not to be assured that there is a *better* Life than the *present*, intended by the Author of our Being for all those who live up to the *Dignity* of their Nature.

That you may always continue so to do, and at the end of a long Life here, be possess'd of the Joys of Paradise *hereafter*, is the hearty Prayer of,

SIR,

Your most obliged

Humble Servant

DANIEL STURMY.

SERMON XIX.

LUKE XVI. 12.

Give an account of thy Stewardship, for thou may'st be no longer Steward.

THIS Chapter consists of two *Instructive Parables*: one of them minds us of the Nature of the *State* in which we live *at present*; and of the Duty which we ought to perform whilst we continue here: and the other informs us in a very *affecting* manner, that our *Condition* in the *next Life* will be *Happy* or *Miserable*, according to our *Fidelity* or *Negligence* in the management of our *Stewardship*: *Give an account*; It behoves us then in the *first* place, from the Character of a *Stewardship* to learn, that *all Men, whilst they are in this Life, do bear the Relation and Capacity of Stewards under God.* 2dly. That *this Relation and Capacity of Stewards under God ceases at our removal out of this World.* Thou may'st be no longer Steward.

ard. 3dly. That, when upon our Removal from this World our Relation of Stewards to God ceaseth, an account of our Stewardship must be given, and we shall be promoted, or degraded in the other World, according as we have behaved our Selves Well, or Ill, in our Stewardship. Give an account of thy Stewardship.

First then from the Character of a Stewardship, we ought to learn that all Men, whilst in this World, do bear the Relation and Capacity of Stewards under God. Now this Character implies, that every Person here is trusted with somewhat or other, which is proper matter for his care and prudence to work upon. Every Steward hath somewhat to manage, Land or Money, Houses or Effects; or Goods and Commodities; somewhat in short which is capable of Improvement, and deserves and requires Oversight. A Steward has not a bare Title but a Place of Trust, and a Province of Business assign'd him by his Lord, who has made choice of him for his Steward. Wherefore, our being here in the Relation of Stewards, under the Providence of God, implies that God hath trusted us all with somewhat or other that is improvable by our Industry and Good management to the Glory of the Divine Goodness.

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There is a great difference between *Stewards*. Some are *Stewards* of more than others: some of *one* Trust, others of *another*: but *all* are *Stewards*: *all* are trusted with one thing or another: *all* have *receiv'd* wherewith to *glorify* God: *all* have somewhat which may be and ought to be *improv'd*: and they can't neglect to improve it but at the peril of displeasing and provoking the great God, whose *Stewards* they are. The *Poor* Man cannot glorify him indeed as the *Rich*; nor the *Cottager* as the *Prince*, or *Magistrate*: but *all* can *glorify* God, if they will: even he who has received but *One* Talent.

2dly. Since the service of a Steward implies that he hath a certain province assign'd, which he is to *manage* and *account* for when his *Lord* thinks fit to *demand* it; but in the mean while whether he *neglect* or *improves* his *trust*; he is free so to do; no one constraining him to mind his business: not *others*, because 'tis not in their power; not his *Lord*, because the time allotted in his own Mind for the tryal of his *Skill* and *Faithfulness* is not yet expired; since, I say, 'tis thus with *Stewards*; from our being *Stewards*, we may learn that we are in the Rank of *those* *Servants* of God, who are not always *constrain'd* upon the
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Spot to be diligent in his service; as *Slaves* and *inferior* Servants, who are immediately corrected, if they are *idle* and *lazy*, and so are compell'd by a *forc'd* toil to be *faithfull* to their *Master*, and can't take their own time and methods of doing their business afterwards, as *Stewards* may; provided they are *faithfull* in the management of what is committed to their *Oversight*, and do produce the *proper Revenue* and *Improvement* of their *Trust*, when their *Lord* requires it.

All God's *Creatures* are his *Servants*, but they are not his *Stewards*. *Stars* and *Winds*, *Frost* and *Snow*, *Plants* and *Mines*, and all *inanimate* *Creatures* are the *Servants* of God: These cannot but *execute* his Will: This they do by a necessity of Nature, and consequently glorify God. But this being a *necessitated* Glorification of him is not ascribable to them for their Honour. And thus Men themselves, as far as they are *inanimate* *Creatures*, by the *Make* and *Growth* of their bodies; and more still as they are *Sensitive* and *Rational* by the Natural powers of *Eating* and *Drinking*; and by the meer *improvableness* of their natures, even whilst they do not improve them; and in short by every thing, wherein their Will hath no concurrence, do

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glorify

glorify God, who is the Author of all the said *unchosen* capacities and *involuntary* actions. Nay the very *Immortality* of the *Damn'd* in *Hell* doth *glorify* God, as he is the Cause of their *eternal Existence* and *Duration*.

But 'tis evident that they *thus* glorify him by *Force* and *Constraint* as *Slaves*; for thus they glorify him no further than inanimate Creatures: because the bare *Eternal Existence* of Creatures ordain'd by God to remain in *Being* for ever, and certain *eternal Capacities* of such Creatures, even whilst they are in *torments*, are things and realities whereof such Creatures can't deprive themselves by the most *incurable* State of *Wickedness*; at the same time that they do deprive themselves of the *prosperity* of such an *immortal Nature* and *Capacity*. No *Wickedness* can deprive Creatures, ordain'd for an *unextinguishable* Existence, of glorifying God by an *Eternal* continuance in *Being*; or by such *natural functions* of their *Being*, which are inseparable from the said *Eternal Existence* of such Creatures. Wherefore, their glorifying God *so* is not to glorify him as *Stewards*; but only to glorify him as *Horse* and *Mule*, nay as the most *Inferior* and *Lifeless* Crea-
tures

tures do; and consequently will not be plac'd to their accounts.

Let us remember that *our being Stewards* do's not imply our having only a *necessary* Capacity of Glorifying God, as *Beasts* have, by a meer *constrain'd* Service: but a Capacity of glorifying him by a *free* Service. St. *Paul* very well knew that all, even the very Wickedest Men, do glorify God, as *Watches* do the *Artists* who compos'd them, by the *Circulation* of their *Blood*, by the *Respiration* of their *Lungs*, by *Sleeping*, *Eating*, *Drinking*, and by all other *natural* Actions, whereby under God our Bodies, and the Union of our Souls to them, are at present supported. These being all of them Methods of his own *Institution*, for the preserving of our *present* subsistence, cannot but redound to the *Honour* of their *Author*, whilst they are carried on in a *regular* process. Nevertheless, he exhorts *Christians* to glorify God in all they did, whether they *Eat* or *Drink*: not by their *barely* Eating and Drinking; for thus they glorify him by necessity, together with *Beast* and *inferior* Creatures; but by the *Rational* Manner and Method of their Management of these Exercises, according to the Laws of *Temperance* and *Virtue*, and in the *free* use of

those *reasonable* Powers, which qualify them to be *accountable* Creatures, and to be trusted with the more *honorable* Service and Employment of *Stewards*. *Devils* and *executed Souls* in *Hell* fulfill, in *their* Way, the *Will* of *God*, and are *subservient* to the *Glory* of his *Eternal Holiness* and *Justice*, by the *Torments* they *undergo*; and by their *dreadful* expressions of the Keenest Sense of them, in endless Weeping and Wailing and Gnashing of Teeth. But *this* *their* glorifying *God* being *unavoidable* to them will not, after Millions of Ages, wherein *God* shall have been thus glorified by them, *qualify* them for his *Favour*. We must glorify *God* as *Stewards*; not barely as *improvable*, but as *improving* and *improved* Creatures and Servants of the Most High. We, as *Stewards*, are born with by *God*, till *his* *time* of calling us to *account*, at the *expiration* of our *Term of Tryal* (which is conceal'd in his own Breast) shall come. However, if we are *unfaithfull* or *negligent*, we have no reason to be *easy*, tho' Sentence is not speedily executed upon us for our Unfaithfulness in our Office: for we have a *liberty* allow'd us *for a time*, which at present is *essential* to the *Dignity* and *Nature* of our *Service*. Wherefore, let us not dare to be *unfaithful*
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by embezzelling our Master's Goods, and spending that time idly which is due to his Service; or misemploying our Talents; tho' we are not held in *with Bit and Bridle*; nor have the Whip always over us. For we shall severely suffer for it another day, if we are guilty of such *Presumption*.

3dly, A Man's being a *Steward* implies that, as he has somewhat to improve; so he has a *Capacity* to improve it. His Lord by his choice of him supposeth him *fit*, and *qualified* for the place he has undertook. Thus our being styl'd *Stewards* by the *Holy Ghost* supposeth every Man qualified, and made able by God to manage with the Skill and Diligence of a *Steward*, whatever circumstances God hath plac'd him in; in order to promote his Glory by his improvement of himself; and doing some good to that part of his *Creation* in which he is planted. Those who can't attain to that knowledge of God, whereto we, who are *Christians*, can; yet, may know him in *some measure*, according to the degrees of their *Natural Light*; to *Worship* and *Praise* him, as a *Spirit* of *infinite Goodness* and *Majesty*. He that is faithfull in that which is least, is faithfull in that which is much; and he that is unjust in the least,

is unjust also in much. To excuse our selves therefore for our *unfaithfulness* in our *own* circumstances, because they are not the *same* with *another Man's*, is *foolish* and *absurd*: For every Man is *accountable* for the management of his own Province: Every Man shall be judg'd according to *what he hath receiv'd*; not according to *what he hath not receiv'd*.

4ly. As a *Steward*, tho' he is not *accountable* to any but his *Lord*, is nevertheless no *Proprietor*, but a *Trustee*, and accountable for his Trust, during his service. So, since in all we have and possess, we are here only *Stewards* under the Providence of God, we must remember that whatever *Wealth* or *Honour*, or *Strength* God gives us now, we are not *Proprietors*; no not of our *Time*, or of our *very Persons*, for we are *Servants*. We are *exempt* from the *Jurisdiction* of *all others*, but not from our *Lord's*: As to *others*, we may use our *freedom* and act *arbitrarily*, as far as we agree with the Rule our Lord hath appointed to be the Measure and Standard of Managing what he hath trusted us with. His *known Pleasure* and not our *own Humour* must be our *Rule*. For *Accountable* persons must not make *sudden fancies* of their own the *Reason* and *Rule* of their Conduct. *Stewards*
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are in an *honorable* service, but in a *service* still; and 'tis requir'd of them to be in subjection, and faithfull to their Lord.

Men in Power are but *Stewards* of their Power under God; and must employ it, as for God, who has ordain'd *Magistrates* to *Encourage* those that *do well*, and to be a *Terror* to *evil Works*.

Rich Men are *Stewards* of God's bounty, and have not *Wealth* conferr'd on them to consume it upon their Lusts. For wo be to the *Rich*, if by their abuse of plenty they only fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtfull Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction. The business appointed them by God, whose *Providence* is the Fountain of *Wealth* and *Honour*, is to be carefull to maintain good works; and to act as his *Almoners* in relieving the necessities of the *Poor*. They should be *Feet* to the *Lame*, and *Eyes* to the *Blind*.

Ministers are the *Stewards* of *Jesus* and of the Mysteries of the Gospel. The Gospel is to be the *Rule* of their *Reason*, not their *Reason* the *Rule* of the Gospel. They have their power for *Edification*, and to be furtherers of the Joy of the Flock of *Christ*: They are not to please Mens itching Ears, nor to be discourag'd by the Censures of

Men from speaking the truth that God hath commanded them to distribute to his *Household*: for they are not to be judg'd by *Man's Day*: they are *Christ's Servants* and he is to judge them: Before him they must stand or fall; and they are not to Consult their *Hearers* but their *Lord* what *Doctrine* they shall preach. They are not to forge a *new Deed* and *Covenant* of *Life* and *Death*; nor to represent *Religion*, *Repentance*, and *Mortification* easier things than they are: They are not to prescribe *new* Conditions of Salvation and *upstart* ways of getting to *Heaven*; but to shew Men that Way which *Christ* hath discover'd and by which he entred it himself: And a *double* wo is denounc'd against them, if to *gratify* their own *Conceit*, or to please and gain the favour of *Superstitious* and *Wicked* Men, they pretend to coin a new Gospel, and to flatter themselves or others, by saying *Peace Peace* to such Persons, as God declares no Peace belongs to.

In short, *Men of all Stations* ought to be pleas'd with the *circumstances* in which God hath plac'd them; and to look upon themselves as a sort of *Stewards*. In all their demeanour they must not act according to the Byass of *Carnal Concupiscence*; of *Pride* and *Vanity*, of *Lust* or *Envy*; of

of *Covetousness* or *Prodigality*, or any other such like *mean* principles: but with an Eye to please that *great God* who is to *judge* them: consequently they must walk according to the directions of *Christ's Gospel*, because they are to be judg'd according to his Gospel. And our business is to shew the *faithfulness* of *Stewards* to God, whilst we are in this World, because we know not how soon our *Stewardship* may be ended; since we know not how soon we may *die*. But this we know that when we die we shall be no longer *Stewards*.

For, *secondly*, *This Relation and Capacity of Stewards under God ceaseth at our Removal into another World*. This is evident from several Reasons. For first, *our State of Tryal ends with this State*. 2ly, *We cannot fit our selves for Judgment in the World of separate Souls*. 3ly, *We are incapable of Redemption by the Blood of Jesus in the World of separate Souls*. 4ly, *We are Trustees of no improvable Talents there; but proprietors of whatever we carry with us thither; and of our everlasting Fortunes, according as Death consigns us over to a State of Misery or of Satisfaction*.

First

First *our State of Tryal expires at the end of this State.* God in his *Disposal* of Creatures, whom he hath ordain'd for *several States*, always appoints the *First* of them for a *State of Tryal*. Upon their *Good* or *Ill* behaviour in *that*, their *Bliss* or *Misery* in another depends. *A State of Tryal*, being in order before a *State of Rewards*, the *first* State of all must be *it*. Of *this* sort of Creatures *Man* is one. We are Creatures design'd for *more than one* State; and therefore to be sure we are in a *Probationary* Capacity in one of these States: For, to what purpose are *two States* allotted us by *Providence*, if one were not in order to another; if one were not a *State of Recompences*, and the other a *State of Tryal*? Now the *first* being always the *State of Tryal*, this being our *first* State must be *our State of Tryal* too: Wherefore, when *this* State is ended, *our State of Tryal* will also be at an end; unless we can be so *sanguine*, as to think God intends us *another* State of Tryal. This *Hope*, I am sure, would be very *vain* and *absurd*. It destroys the *essential* distinction of a State of Tryal, to suppose it capable of being *repeated*. We may as well hope for *two thousand*, as for *two different* States of Tryal. Wherefore let us not flatter our selves with any vain and deceit-

deceitfull hope of this kind: for if we do, we shall find our selves wretchedly cheated in the end, after we have pleas'd our fancy with such an idle delusion. Some persons are apt to think it hard, that their eternal happiness should be hazarded by their mismanagement of themselves in some short and uncertain a State as this is. Not considering that 'tis inconsistent with the *Nature* and *Design* of a State of Tryal to be very long. There would be a waste of *Duration*, if it were so. 'Tis a monstrous folly indeed, that the impenitently Wicked are guilty of, to be treasuring up *endless Wrath* and *Misery* to themselves for the sake of so *short* an enjoyment of their sinfull pleasures; when for as *short* a Life of *Selfdenyal* and *Obedience* and *Holinefs*, they might put themselves in possession of an *Eternal Kingdom*.

Now then, since our time of Tryal is expir'd at Death; and a Sentence of *Bliss* is past upon the *Soul* then for a *good* use; or a Sentence of *Misery* for it's *abuse* of it's State of Tryal; tho' the *Body* will not be sentenc'd to either *Glory* or *Torture before* the Resurrection; our *Stewardship* is plainly over at that time: *Good Men* are then free from all *Probationary* cares and hazards by the favour of their God: and
Wicked

Wicked Men have then lost their Capacity of making their fortunes by *faithfulness* to their *Stewardship*, tho' they might have done it before. He that hath been unfaithfull in one *Stewardship* will not be trusted with another. There would be no end of God's bearing with Men's folly, and of Tryal for their recovery; if more than one State should be indulg'd them. For what should incline one to think, that they who would be so giddy and hare-brain'd, as to abuse one State of Tryal (by their behaviour in which their *Eternal State* was to be *determin'd*) would not abuse another, if they could obtain it? Here 'tis that *Christians* are to run the *Race* that is set before them: This is the *Vine-yard* we are to labour in, and if we finish the Work for which we were sent hither, before that night of Death comes when no Man can work, the *Vintage* will be the *richer*, and we the *Gainers* by it. But if we are *idle*, we shall neither have another *Day*, nor another *Vineyard* to work in. Let us mend our Lives, whilst our Day lasts, that we may not need to cry *Lord, Lord*, when we should be giving a good account of our Selves, and of our improvement of our Time.

2dly,

2dly, We can't fit our selves for Judgment in *the World of separate Spirits*, for the *Scripture* tells us, that we shall be judg'd according to our Works, and what we have done *in the Body*; whether it be *Good* or whether it be *Evil*. But *separate Souls* have no *Bodies* to act in. They can't there exercise *self-denial*; nor be examples of *Contempt of this World*; of *Chastity* or *Temperance* in the way of *Virtue*: for *these* Virtues are peculiar to *embodied Creatures*: nor can they be commended for refraining from the Contrary Vices, when they can no longer commit them. They cannot then *feed* the *Hungry*; nor *cloath* the *Naked*; nor *give drink* to the *Thirsty*, when they have not wherewith to do it; and are in a place, where there are neither *Hungry*, nor *Thirsty* nor *Naked* Persons to want their Relief. Now certainly, when Men are disabled for the works and business of *Stewards*, they are dismiss'd from the *Office*: for all *Stewards* have the trust of somewhat to be distributed among the needy on their Lord's account. Wherefore let us *now*, whilst we are in *Bodies*, and can forfeit or fit our selves for his *favour*, attend the *proper* Business and Offices of our Stewardship, before Death hurries us out of this blessed Capacity.

ry. For, faith Christ, *who is that faithful and wise Steward whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, to give them their portion of Meat in due Season. Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he comes, shall find so doing. Of a truth, I say unto you, He shall make him Ruler over all that he hath. But if that Servant say in his heart, my Lord delays his coming, and shall beat the under-servants, and be drunken; the Lord of that Servant will come in an Hour, when he looketh not for him; and in an Hour, when he is not aware; and will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers.* Luke XII. 46.

3dly, We are Uncapable of benefit by the Blood and Redemption of *Jesus in the World of separate Souls.* Christ died for embodied Souls, and to that end was *Incaruate.* We must therefore apply the benefit and efficacy of his *Blood* to our Souls, whilst we are in Bodies: for he died not for *disbodied Souls.* And indeed we may as well suppose the benefits of his Blood applicable to *Apostate Angels* as to *separate Souls*: but he has declar'd by his *Apostle*, that he hath purchas'd no Redemption by his Blood, for *Angels*: Why then should we think that he hath purchas'd it for the
sepa-

separate Souls of Men? Are not *Naked Spirits* as capable of being aton'd for by *Blood* as *Naked Souls*? Why may not the *former* be accepted of after a bare abuse of their State of Tryal, as well as the *latter*; who have not only mispent their State of Tryal, but withall have sinn'd against the very *Capacity of Redemption*? Why may not God vouchsafe to *those* the favour of a new Tryal, in their confinements in the Regions of Air, as well as to *these* such a favour in their apartments where Wicked *separate Souls* are Confin'd? But if *separate Souls* were incapable of Mercy, after they are gone hence and are no more to be seen under the Sun; they are plainly in the Case of *Stewards turn'd out of their Service*; and incapable of doing any thing whereby they can oblige their Lord. The Honour of being God's Stewards must be *irrecoverable* to them, when the Intercession of the *Son* and *Heir* of their *Lord* cannot *regain* them his favour; tho' he is their true *well Wisher*; and would have pleaded for them, had they not been *irreclaimable* in their *Negligence* and *Unfaithfulness* before they were call'd to an account.

But 4^{ly}, It deserves to be consider'd that we shall be, in the *separate State*, *Trustees* of no *improvable* Talents; but are *Proprietors*

prietors of whatever we carry with us thither; and of everlasting Tortures, according as Death delivers us for a State of *miser*y or *satisfaction*. Here Good Men are but *Trustees* of *some Talents*. Like *Farmers* they *till* and *improve* the *Lands* of *another* person: But if they are found *faithfull*, as soon as they are releas'd from their *Stewardship*, they are made *Proprietors* and *Eternal Inheritors* of what they but *farm'd* out before. From being *Stewards* they then *rise* and are *advanc'd* by their *Lord* to be *Freeholders* of those *Estates* and *Revenues* with which they were but *entrusted* before: Then they have what they cannot *forfeit*; and by having been *faithfull Servants* and *Trustees* of *Growing Souls*, and a *few Talents*, and a *limited State of Duration* in *this World*, they at length become *Masters* of *themselves*, of *enlarg'd* and *fix'd Souls*; of *Multiplied Talents* and of an *unbounded State of Duration*: For tho' at the *Resurrection* their *Glory* will be augmented; yet they are already *Owners* of a rich Crop of *delights*; and of a *plentifull Fortune*, and their State in the *Nature* and *Qualities* of it is not *alterable*, tho' 'twill be much *improv'd* at the *Resurrection*. On the other hand, those who were *unfaithful* in the *management* of

of their *Stewardship* under God, having no *Recompence* for their having been *Stewards*; and being turn'd out of it with *Disgrace* are Heirs of Nothing but their *Guilt*; and God deserts them and leaves them *Proprietors* of *Shipwreck'd Souls*, and *Guilt unpardon'd*; and of all that *Shame* and *Remorse*; and *Confusion* and *Sorrow* and those *dire Presages*, which make up the *Inventory* of the *Furniture* of *Minds* banish'd from the Presence of *Jesus*; and *sentenc'd* to the Society of the *Devil* and his *Angels*. This too will be their *deplorable Condition for ever*; *Misery* and *Poverty* are their *Immediate Inheritance* at *Death*: their State is sad and deplorable, and meets with no *Commiseration*, and will be *ever so*; yea, *aggravated* at the *Reunion* of their *Souls* to their *Bodies*.

I shall, on another Occasion, speak of the *particular Judgment* pass'd upon Souls *newly departed out of their Bodies*, which is the last Branch of my Subject; But, I can't dismiss the *other two Heads of Discourse*, without a practical Review of them. Is it true then that, all our Circumstances, however distinguish'd are of God's Appointment; that they are *improvable* to his *Glory* and our *own Advancement*, and must be accounted for before his Tribunal? Are

we Stewards of our *Riches* and of our *Poverty*; of our *Reputation* and of our *Disgrace*; of our *Health* and of our *Sickness*; of our *Successes* and of our *Disappointments*; of our *Eminence* and of our *Obscurity*; of our *Power* in high Posts, and of our *Ease* and *Security* in an overlook'd Station; of all our *Time*; of all our *Faculties*; of our *very Souls* and *Persons* in this World? Let us then glorify God both with *Body* and *Soul* all possible ways, for they are *His*. Be faithfull in the promotion of his Honour, whilst you are able, and all will be your own another Day. You can't be *tardy* and *negligent* in your Great Master's Service without defrauding and wronging your own Souls. If you give not a good Account of your selves and your Management, when you surrender up your *Service* with your *Bodies*, you will be *Beggars* and *Gally-slaves* for ever. But if you give a Commendable Account of your Behaviour and Improvement, you will be Lords of a Mannour and of a Rich Inheritance of your own; an Inheritance which will not pass from Father to Son; but of which ye your Selves will be the sole Heirs and Enjoyers in an Immortal Youth.

Remember then your *Trust* and *Character* and *Prospect*, and act answerably to it.

To

To this End, look over your Accounts often: let your Books be well kept and cast up; that you may not be at a stand, whenever your Lord calls for them. Ask your Conscience often and strictly whether you have improv'd your Talents to God's Glory. And since 'tis to God that your Account is to be given; strive to please him from a *pure Principle of Love*. A Generous Desire of his Approbation will qualify you for the most *desirable* Rewards; and animate your Virtue to be Proof against the envenom'd Arrows of Calumny; and to weather out all the Discouragements it must meet with from a World *that lies in Wickedness*.

Affect your selves with a *Vigorous Sense* of the *last Judgment*. Did we think *often* and *seriously* of a Judgment to come, how *penitent* should we be for our Sins? How *zealous* for God's Glory and to be as serviceable to the World as we can possibly be? How *diligent* in improving our Talents? How strict in keeping the *Lord's Day* Holy? How *Circumspect* in our *Conversation*? How *devout* and *earnest* in our Addresses to the Throne of Grace? How *Heavenly* in our *Intentions*? How *Meek* and *Patient* under *Afflictions*? How *Serene* and *Unconcern'd* when reproach'd for

our Love of Jesus and Virtue? How Moderate in our Use of sensual Refreshments? In a word, what manner of Persons should we be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness?

FINIS.



